

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 92

Subject: Written questions from councillors.

Date of meeting: 7 April 2022

Report of: Executive Director for Governance, People & Resources

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

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

(1) Councillor Appich

At Policy and Resources committee on 10 February 2022 we discussed and agreed cross-party that vulnerable people in our council housing should get more support and that properties should be let at least in a liveable state, with particular reference to providing floor coverings.

What progress has been made with this - as charities are still getting applications for carpets from new tenants in our council housing?

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

(2) Councillor Grimshaw

Access Point

What is the response time for residents contacting Access Point by email as advised when calling by phone? Does Access Point have significant delays when responding to emails and how long in general is the wait for a referral?

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

(3) Councillor Grimshaw

Dyslexia

Do Brighton & Hove City Council residents have access to a diagnostic service which assesses dyslexia? If so, what is the waiting time and how is this service accessible?

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

(4) Councillor Allcock

Transport Performance Measures

What are the range of performance measures regularly employed by the Council's Transport Team and how are they applied when initiating transport related projects?

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

(5) Councillor Williams

Play Bus:

A number of years ago a Play Bus run by Brighton & Hove Council's Play Service operated to bring free open access play sessions into the heart of local communities.

The Play Bus visited locations across Brighton & Hove including Whitehawk and Hangleton and was extremely popular, providing essential opportunities for young children to play, interact and develop early learning skills.

Why was this vital and valued service stopped and can we bring it back?

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

(6) Councillor Moonan

CQC Inspection:

What preparation is HASC undertaking for the new CQC Inspection and how confident are they that we will achieve a 'good' rating?

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

(7) Councillor Moonan

Craven Vale:

What steps are being taken to achieve maximum bed occupancy at Craven Vale and how are we going to recruit sufficient staff to run this service?

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

(8) Councillor Moonan

Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

How has the pandemic affected the implementation of the Brighton & Hove Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2030, and are we still on track to achieve its targets?

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

(9) Councillor Hamilton

Play Areas

The play areas in Portslade parks are being improved and residents welcome this. However, there are concerns that the needs of children with disabilities are not being met. I understand that this being discussed at a series of meetings. Please can you give me an update on what progress is being made in this matter?

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

(10) Councillor Hamilton

Housing Site Delays

There are two potential housing sites in my ward, namely the Portslade Old People's Day Club and Portslade Village Centre. There appears to be no progress on these proposals. Please can you tell me what is causing the delay?

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

(11) Councillor Evans

Housing Options Phone Lines:

What are the opening times for residents to get a response when calling Housing Options, as I have been made aware from a resident that when they called on two consecutive days in a row that by 2.30pm the answering message said the line was closed?

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

(12) Councillor Simson

Funding received for Community Safety

Please can you outline and provide a breakdown of the funding awarded to Brighton and Hove City Council for Community Safety from the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner for 2022-23.

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

(13) Councillor Mears

Funds received for Changing Places Toilets

On 24 March 2022 the Government announced that Brighton & Hove City Council has been awarded £330,000 from the Government's Changing Places Fund, to fund eight proposed changing places toilets.

Can the Chair provide details of the eight changing places facilities which will be set up with the funding received?

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

(14) Councillor Bell

Industrial Relations

Residents have continued to raise complaints about elements of City Clean's performance since the industrial dispute last year.

Can the Leader of the Council advise:

- a) What is cost to the taxpayer of the final settlement that was paid out to end the industrial dispute?
- b) What tangible benefits have been introduced to the service since the dispute was resolved?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(15) Councillor Peltzer Dunn

Residents are deeply concerned that the Council has not adequately prepared to mark the historic Platinum Jubilee in Brighton and Hove and may have failed to apply in time for several opportunities and funding streams available to mark the event.

It is important that we mark this historic occasion and make sure it is memorable for residents of the city, not only to boost civic pride but also to provide a boost for the economy as we come out of Covid. We are a city with a Royal history and a Royal Palace at Brighton Pavilion. The Queen has visited our city many times over the years – including to confer City status on Brighton and Hove - and deserves our great respect and admiration.

Time is now running short before the four-day Queen's Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend and the Council needs to provide more detail and more focus on what it has arranged and how we will be participating.

It is noted that other local authority areas are being much more proactive, for example, South Gloucestershire Council are making it easier for local residents wanting to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee by waiving fees for people wanting to arrange street parties or events in public open spaces.

It would be a huge shame if Brighton and Hove City Council has forgotten to apply to participate in the Civic Honours competition, which our city with its wonderful heritage and royal history would have been ideally suited towards participating in. There are also many [funding streams](#) available to local groups for the Platinum Jubilee to hold events but local groups report that these have not been properly promoted.

Can the Leader of the Council confirm:

Will he join other councils in waiving fees for Platinum Jubilee events?

- a) Did the Council apply to participate in the Civic Honours competition? It was noted that 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 and that 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 as this has still not been answered?

- b) Can he provide a programme of its official events for the Platinum Jubilee Year so that we can communicate this information with our constituents?

Can he confirm that the Council will use its communications channels to promote the Jubilee and the events the City will be holding, which is still not clear to residents and local community groups?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(16) Councillor McNair

Twittens Accessibility issues

The gates in the twitten from Barrhill Avenue to Vale Avenue park do not allow wheelchair access, making access to this park very difficult for disabled visitors.

- a) Will these gates be improved?
- b) How many gates across the city do not allow wheelchair users access? Will they all be widened to allow wheelchair access?

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

(17) Councillor Brown

Hove Park shared path

The pathway cutting through the middle of Hove Park from the Droveaway is a shared path and needs to be signed as such. It is a cycle route but also an important pathway in a busy park environment used by families, people jogging and walking dogs.

Recently there have been a number of collisions involving cyclists and members of the public and dogs with cyclists going too fast after descending down the very steep hill at the Droveaway.

The signage is virtually non-existent and needs to be improved. Residents would like to see it signed and made explicit that this is a shared space with cyclists encouraged to slow down.

Residents would like to see the Council put in place signage at the entrance points and on the surface of the pathway itself to indicate this is a shared space and to encourage caution for the safety of all park users.

Will the Chair commit to review the current system and install some more appropriate signage to make it clear to cyclists that they need to slow down and to all users that it is a shared path?

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

(18) Councillor Bagaeen

Vandalised defibrillator at Hove Park

The defibrillator at Hove Park has been vandalised twice in recent years and the box is currently sitting empty, filled up with bottles and rubbish.

It's a great shame for all residents and visitors to Hove Park that this piece of equipment has been vandalised twice and is now no longer available.

It's also a shame for the local Rotary Club who paid for the original and for the cafe which offered to host it.

With so many people using the park particularly during the last two years with the pandemic, and all the new tennis facilities, all weather football pitches and fitness centre, the park really needs to have a defibrillator. It is a really vital piece of equipment as it could save someone's life.

As it has been vandalised in that position twice, it needs to be in a more secure place that is also accessible and known to the public.

The Manager of the Hove Park Café, Carla Lampreda, believes that due to the recurrent anti-social behaviour at night by the Hove Park Café, a replacement defibrillator should be located elsewhere in a more secure location.

- a) Will the Council commit to work on providing a replacement defibrillator for Hove Park as soon as possible at a new site within the park, in consultation with the Rotary Club?
- b) Will the Council consider installing CCTV cameras at Hove Park to tackle persistent antisocial behaviour at night next to the Hove Park Café?

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

(19) Councillor Meadows

Litter on the A27

A wall of litter lining Brighton's arterial A27 road has left the road verge in its worst ever condition and the Council must do more to clean it up.

The litter, which has been building up for months if not years at many points, is made up of bottles, takeaway food; containers; and also plastics associated with construction materials.

There are concerns not only about the visual appearance of this arterial road which passes through the Brighton and Hove unitary authority area, but also of pollution and the impact on wildlife through this section of the South Downs.

It is the Council's responsibility to organise litter clean-ups along the A27 and to request permission to do this from National Highways for access etc. but this has not been done now for some time and the litter has built up to an unacceptable level.

We need to see the Council put in place an overarching plan to deal with this issue and ensure that the litter is regularly removed. This must include more regular clean-ups but also communication with the construction industry to encourage netting and signage as well.

Until the Council treats this as a priority, litter is going to continue to build up and we are concerned that it will put people off coming to Brighton.

Will the council commit to:

- a) Coordinating and organising more regular clean-ups so as not to allow rubbish to build up for years;
- b) Communicating with the construction industry to encourage netting of the back of trucks to stop plastics flying out;
- c) Installing CCTV cameras at hotspots as a deterrent and to issue penalty fines;
- d) Installing signage to discourage littering and show penalties, to give more of a sign that the City cares about littering and its impact.

Furthermore, can the Council:

- e) Outline its schedule of works for clearing litter from the A27 during the following municipal years:
 - i. 2020-1
 - ii. 2021-2
- f) Outline its proposed schedule of works for clearing litter from the A27 for the following future municipal years:
 - i 2022-3

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

(20) Councillor Theobald

Patcham Roundabout project delays

I have been advised that the latest reason for the delay in the Patcham Roundabout landscaping project is that the Council was unable to submit a planning application as it was unable to find someone within the council to support providing scaled drawings, so this application was withdrawn. Residents are now deeply frustrated with the Council and its ongoing delays in upgrading Patcham Roundabout. The funding has been there for many years but the Council seems unable to arrange these basic works.

Can the Chair:

- a) Outline the status of the works to landscape Patcham Roundabout.
- b) Advise whether the scaled drawings required to submit a planning application have now been undertaken.

- c) Assure local councillors that a new target date for this planning application to go in has been set and that the Council will expedite this as a priority and advise Councillors what this date is?

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

(21) Councillor Barnett

Knoll Park skate park proposal

Knoll Park, which includes the Knoll Recreation Ground, is the main green space for Knoll estate in Hove. It is well-used but is currently tired and in need of investment, with not enough facilities for young people.

Residents and community groups such as the Hangleton & Knoll Project would like to see the Council look providing new facilities for young people, such as a skate park.

At the moment, young people walk straight in and straight out of Knoll Park because there is little to do. Residents would like to see teenagers having something to do instead of hanging round in groups, strolling round the estate.

A skate park facility would give them an interest and somewhere positive to go – to take their skateboards, bikes and go to the park.

Such a facility would tie in with the Hangleton & Knoll Project which do some great local outreach work. The Hangleton & Knoll Project runs a café in Knoll Park, which they open up during the summer months, and a new skate park element would provide activities for young people could dovetail with their local work.

Will the Chair:

- a) Advise whether the Council has any current plans to upgrade Knoll Park and if so, outline these plans.
- b) Investigate and consider, in consultation with the Hangleton & Knoll project, a new skate park facility at Knoll Park to give younger people in the area a facility to use.

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

(22) Councillor Lewry

Safer Streets Fund Round 4

On 18 March 2022 the Government announced the fourth round of the Safer Streets Fund. Under the programme, Brighton & Hove City Council could benefit from a share of £150 million of new funding made available through the Conservative Government's Safer Streets Fund. All local authorities are encouraged to apply.

This additional funding from the fourth round of the Safer Streets Fund will go towards measures proven to tackle neighbourhood crime, violence against women and girls, and anti-social behaviour. This will help to prevent potential

perpetrators committing crimes in the first place, improving the safety of our streets and helping our communities to flourish as we build back safer. The Safer Streets Programme provides funding to areas most affected by crime and anti-social behaviour and will allow local authorities, civil society organisations and police and crime commissioners to bid for up to £500k per year for each project. The latest round of the fund targets neighbourhood crime, violence against women and girls and – for the first time – anti-social behaviour.

All local authorities to encourage to apply for the fourth round of funding that will have a transformative effect on the safety of people in their local communities.

Projects from previous rounds of funding have made a huge impact on local communities across the country. Funding has been used to improve the security for thousands of homes that were vulnerable to burglary with alleyway gates installed to prevent an easy escape for offenders. Other projects across the country have focused on setting up neighbourhood watch groups, increased CCTV and introducing wardens to undertake community engagement and train members of the public in crime prevention – demonstrating levelling up in action.

Under the last Labour administration, Brighton and Hove City Council declined an opportunity to apply for funds in Round 1 of the Safer Streets Fund. This oversight led to our funding being lost and allocated elsewhere. The oversight occurred during the 2019/20 municipal year. Brighton and Hove City Council was contacted by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and offered an opportunity to participate in a joint Sussex bid for Round 1 of the Government's Safer Streets Fund. Brighton and Hove had been identified by the Office of the PCC as statistically the area most in need of crime prevention infrastructure. Despite this ranking and offer, Brighton and Hove City Council did not choose to participate in the joint bid. As a result our City missed out on funding, which went to Eastbourne and Hastings Councils which did progress applications and were awarded £893,366.

The Council is getting a reputation in the public eye as being soft on crime and antisocial behaviour and not treating it as a priority. There is no doubt that residents want to see this Council focus much more on safety in the public domain in this city.

It is the responsibility of the Council to provide basic infrastructure such as street lighting and CCTV in Brighton & Hove to make the public domain as safe as possible, but the Council has fallen so far behind compared to other local councils.

Central Brighton recently ranked 8th highest for reported crime of 33,000 areas across the England and Wales according to a national analysis of crime reports, with Pavilion Gardens and surrounds recording seven incidents of rape in three years. There have also been 100 incidents of drink spiking across the wider county over a 10-month period, many in Brighton and Hove.

Can the Chair:

- a) Provide an assurance that Brighton and Hove City Council will prioritise submitting a full application to Round 4 of the Safer Street Fund?
- b) Advise whether the Council currently has a standing list of priority areas which needs Safer Streets Funding which it can call upon when funding opportunities arise? If so, can the Chair provide a copy of this list?

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

(23) Councillor Peltzer Dunn

A259 cycle lane decision

Now that the Administration has voted to reduce the westbound A259 down to a single lane road, will the Chair:

- a) Undertake to publish detailed air quality readings taken at least one point in the vicinity of The Hove Lagoon and the Wharf Road junction prior to the implementation of the scheme in order that readings taken subsequent to the completion of the scheme can provide a sound base for judging the environmental impact of the scheme?
- b) Advise the Council if any traffic levels have been taken in any of the roads running south to north from the A259 to New Church Road?
- c) If so will he publish the same and if not will he give the reasons for why no such information was deemed appropriate prior to the decision to proceed bearing in mind the potential environmental effect on residential areas within the area?

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

(24) Councillor Nemeth

Welcome Back Fund

Five streets in Brighton & Hove – Boundary Road, Portland Road, George Street, London Road and St James’s Street – were selected as recipients of approximately £300,000 funding through the Welcome Back Fund.

Please provide a breakdown of (i) expenditure to date and (ii) proposed expenditure for (a) Boundary Road, (b) Portland Road, (c) George Street, (d) London Road and (e) St James’s Street.

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(25) Councillor Mears

Unanswered Question

Please can I have an answer to my question asked at the Policy & Resources committee 2 December 2021 and followed up on 27 January 2022.

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(26) Councillor Childs

Free bus travel for young people

What would the cost to the council be to provide free bus travel to children and young people under 18 and in full time education who live in the city?

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

(27) Councillor Childs

Ukrainian refugees

How many Ukrainian families will the Council agree to house and host, and will they commit to a minimum number?

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

(28) Councillor Childs

Wheelie bins

Will the council commit to consult with residents in future before introducing wheelie bins or changing receptacle types?

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

(29) Councillor Childs

Urban fringe

Can the Council please summarise any legal reasons that would prevent or impede the transfer of council owned urban fringe land to charities or community interest companies for use and public accessible land?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(30) Councillor Childs

Free swimming

The council provides free swimming to children and young people after school hours during the week, but pools are often closed to the public as a consequence of private swimming lessons. What measures will the council take to ensure that genuine access is provided for free swimming, and will they commit to ensure that private lessons do not prevent access to general swims after 3pm on weekdays?

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

(31) Councillor Wilkinson

Disability Access:

The recent news that a planned lift for people with disabilities has been delayed on a development in Hove and in violation of a planning condition has raised the issue of access for disabled people in our city. The Equality Act 2010 states that treating someone with a protected characteristic – in this instance disabled people who can't use stairs – less favourably than others, is direct discrimination. Can the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing board inform if the City Council has a Disability Access Officer and if not, does she agree that such a role would benefit the health and wellbeing of our disabled community and improve awareness of their needs when moving around the city?

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