

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 16

Subject: Written questions from councillors.

Date of meeting: 21 July 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 Fishleigh

Please would you confirm who is responsible for the slip road to East Brighton Golf Club. This is a sloping road from Roedean Road to the walled entrance of the golf club. If it is the council, would you please start the process of moving on the lived-in vans whose inhabitants are disturbing the peace.

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

Thank you for your question.

This slip road is not owned by the council, so we have no jurisdiction over it and no records on who owns it. Further enquiries will need to be made on this.

Officers from our Traveller Liaison team undertook a site visit to identify the location, and found one lived in vehicle. However, given the land is not within council jurisdiction we will not be able to undertake any enforcement action to move this van on.

2. Councillor Grimshaw

How many LA and Housing association tenant households are trying to transfer downsize through the Homemove system of bidding?

How long is the average wait time before a successful downsizing transfer happens?

How many bids does it take on average to successfully achieve a downsizing transfer ?

Is there any system in place to match down sizing transfers with households looking to upsize?

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

On Homemove, there are currently 189 households who are seeking to transfer because they are under-occupying their current home. Of course, there will be other tenants who are under-occupying who want be registered for transfer.

Brighton & Hove City Council does not have access to data on all social housing tenants who are seeking to move. Some Housing Associations will re-let their properties outside of the Council's housing register, and most will retain a proportion of re-lets which are only offered to their tenants. Typically this would include people who are looking to downsize. Therefore, the true number of households looking to downsize is unknown to us.

How long is the average wait time before a successful downsizing transfer happens?

How many bids does it take on average to successfully achieve a downsizing transfer ?

Average timescales will vary based on a number of factors. For example, the property size needed. We will tend to have more 1-bed properties that become available for re-letting, because we have a high proportion of these in our stock, and people tend to move out of 1-bed homes more often because of changes in their household size and needs. However, 2-beds become available less regularly, so average waiting times tend to be longer. Waiting times will also vary depending on how selective bidders are on property type and location.. For example, street properties with a garden are very popular so only those with the highest priority (or longest waiting times) will be successful.

In practice, people who are looking to downsize will often have longer waiting times because . they tend to be more selective bidding on properties which are likely to have a high number of other households bidding.

Is there any system in place to match down sizing transfers with households looking to upsize?

Yes. This is called a 'mutual exchange'. This can be accessed via a dedicated address: mutualexchange@brighton-hove.gov.uk, where requirements can be registered. To qualify, each person must:

- have a secure tenancy agreement, not including introductory tenancies
- the properties being swapped meet everybody's needs
- be up to date with paying their rent

3. Councillor Grimshaw

How many LA and HA homes in the city with an energy rating of C have the bare minimum 100mm of loft insulation? Recommendations have changed and new builds must have 300mm as minimum.

Should a private householder have loft insulation of 100mm or less they would qualify for grant funding to increase the insulation thickness.

Do Brighton and Hove City council have plans to increase loft insulation thickness in their properties to ensure that council tenants have the same levels of adequate insulation as private home owners?

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

Achieving carbon reductions and sustainability in housing is a key priority in our Housing workplan. June Housing Committee considered a detailed Carbon Reduction in Housing update report, including progress on projects and future plans to support the council's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030.

We have created a new cross tenure Housing Sustainability & Energy team which will be developing an Energy Plan for Council Housing, aligned to our Asset Management Strategy, and our Warmer Homes Scheme for private sector homes.

We do not currently have the information requested in relation to LA & HA homes.

We are currently in the process of reviewing our housing stock data to assess the feasibility of various energy saving and renewable energy measures. The condition of loft insulation will form a key part of this analysis. We are also working on the development of our private sector Warmer Homes scheme including reviewing data on non-Council-owned stock.

Installing or topping up loft insulation to recommended depths in all council homes where it is feasible will form part of our plans and programmes in future years to reduce Carbon emissions and residents' bills.

We are currently using existing programmes such as the Air Source Heat Pump programme to identify these opportunities now and will include it as an additional element in the Solar PV programme.

As part of our existing planned works roofing programme, we also install or increase insulation to 300mm.

In addition, the Housing Repairs & Maintenance roofing teams also undertake work around loft insulation top ups. This work is either generated by the tenant contacting us, roofing operatives noting the lack of insulation when inspecting the property or referrals from the damp team who are visiting the property to investigate damp/condensation. The team currently have a significant backlog of repair work. However once this backlog reduces we propose to encourage tenants to check their lofts and contact us

When undertaking replacement of loft insulation as part of our repairs service, this is either upgraded or replaced in full to 300mm to meet the current requirements.

4. Councillor Childs

Given the 1000s of men in our city, both residents and visitors, suffer from incontinence, often brought on by cancer treatment, as well as a valued trans man community, will the council agree to install sanitary bins into all council owned men's toilets within a reasonable timeframe?

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

Thank you for your question.

You raise a very important point. The team are undertaking a service review, and this can be included. However, budget would need to be allocated and Members can consider this as part of budget setting.

5. Councillor Childs

Last year I asked that the Council provide an assurance that asbestos materials be labelled in situ in all school buildings. This does still not appear to have been undertaken. Will the council agree that upon re-survey, all ACMs in schools shall be prominently labelled with industry standard labels so as to warn occupants of the presence of this hazardous material and thus adhere to best practice in asbestos management?

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

The Labour Group of councillors refused to agree a limit of written questions at a meeting of Policy & Resources Committee, despite having previously agreed it at Constitution Review Working Group. Since we have had repeated assurances that you will reduce the number of written questions you submit, to prove that a limit was not needed. Once again this is not being adhered to and as such I will not be providing an answer to your written question.

6. Councillor Childs

Will the Council please agree to gate St James's Place in order to prevent the daily defecation and urination and other anti-social behaviour that our long suffering residents have to put up with?

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

Thank you for the question. Unfortunately, it is not possible to gate this alleyway. About 15 or so years ago the rear section of this alleyway was subject to a highway extinguishment order and is gated from the rear boundary of the

mind shop up to its northernmost boundary. This means that the current public highway designation runs from the street to the gate, and beyond the gate is no longer public highway and counts as the dwelling boundary for the properties beyond it.

There have been previous requests to gate the front section, however, as this would then completely restrict access to the residential properties further north on St James Place, this would not be possible under existing legislation. However, officers will ensure that the ASB issues highlighted is raised with police partners at the regular tasking meetings and also whether additional cleaning will be possible.

7. Councillor Childs

Please can the Council provide details of compulsory purchase orders of land actioned or undertaken since May 2019?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

There have been no compulsory purchase orders of land actioned or undertaken since May 2019.

8. Councillor Childs

Will the council agree to install two permanent iron footbridges over Madeira Drive to allow pedestrians to access the beach during motor rallies and other races and events?

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

Motor events and speed trial events take place annually at Madeira Drive. The access to the beach will be able to be retained in future years during such events due to the new boardwalk access now created which allows access via the black rock station (at Black Rock) on the small number of occasions the Road is in use for these events. It is unlikely that permanent bridges would be acceptable from a planning view point in prominent locations over Madeira Drive and there is presently no funding allocated for such a proposal.

9. Councillor Williams

I am involved in assisting a number of women who have been made homeless due to domestic abuse. I have found that accessing domestic abuse support services inadequate to say the least. I waited three weeks for a call back in one instance. Why is this and what is the administration doing about it?

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

Thank you for the question. I am sorry to hear of the experiences that you had accessing services to support those experiencing domestic abuse. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has awarded the city council additional funds to help it to meet its duties in relation to safe accommodation under the Domestic Abuse act. Amongst other things, TECC committee has agreed to use some of these funds to appoint a housing independent domestic violence advocate who will be co-located within the council housing teams. The role is to support individuals exploring housing options if they are subject to domestic abuse.

If details of the case/s can be shared we can look into these in more detail. Under changes introduced through the Domestic Abuse Act in 2021, people who are fleeing Domestic Abuse are now automatically deemed to be in Priority Need if they are homeless. In the first instance this will involve ensuring they are safe regardless of their tenure situation and then working with them to, if necessary, secure safe alternative housing. Understanding what happened in the case/s raised will help us ensure our process is working effectively and enable us to make improvements where this isn't.

10. Councillor Appich

Would the Leader please set out what progress has been achieved in establishing a pilot care co operative called for by the Labour group a year ago and agreed unanimously?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

The care co-operative model can now be explored as commissioning plans are starting to move forward once again following the pandemic, which delayed the majority of the commissioning plans.

P&R Committee in July 2021 requested the Council to support a Care co-operative feasibility study which would look to develop a model of co-operative care services for homecare in the city for older adults and those with disabilities, in co-production with client groups. Due to the pandemic the majority of commissioning plans have been affected and in most cases, where put on hold, these are now starting to move forward. Care co-operatives are in the majority developed, owned and managed by their members and as such the commissioning relationship is different from traditional care services and the council would not look to establish a pilot scheme itself. However HASC are due to meet with an interested party and this model will be explored to consider the feasibility of care cooperatives models within the city and identify what support they may require.

11. Councillor Brown

Why has the Council not publicised the consultation for the draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment more widely as it is a critical document for residents?

Some areas of the City , such as Hove Park Ward , are not well served. We have no doctors surgery, no dental practice and only one pharmacy that is located in a supermarket.

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

As part of the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) process to ensure we captured robust feedback from Brighton and Hove residents we conducted a telephone survey of 1000 residents that are representative of the population of Brighton and Hove. The findings from this survey are included in the full report and informed the report recommendations. The consultation process is another opportunity to check with residents regarding their views of community pharmacy. The consultation was put on the public consultation portal and was shared with all members of the PNA Steering group to share with their stakeholders, this included Healthwatch as well as Local Pharmaceutical Committee, NHS Sussex and NHS England. Healthwatch sent round the link to the consultation survey to its networks. A news story about the PNA assessment consultation was shared on the council's website and with local media on 29 June. A link to this has been shared on BHCC social media accounts a number of times and will continue to be shared regularly on social media until the closing date of 7 August. Information about the consultation were also shared with staff on the council's intranet on 30 June and was shared with all councillors from the HWB and has gone round to community and voluntary sector groups.

12. Councillor Theobald

The civic flowerbed at Patcham Roundabout has been in a poor state this year. There are more weeds than flowers in it during the Jubilee weekend. Last year the Council planted the flower bed out but this year it didn't. Why is that?

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

Thank you for your question.

I am pleased to let you know that the bed was planted at the beginning of July with a mixture of Cosmos and Salvias- Due to a national labour shortage, caused in parts by Brexit, City Parks are struggling to recruit sufficient numbers of staff, which has led to significant service disruption.

13. Councillor McNair

When will CCTV be fitted at Birchgrove Crescent to stop the constant flytipping?

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

Thank you for your question.

We recognise that there is a severe fly-tipping problem at Birchgrove Crescent. It is anticipated that cameras will be installed in October

2022. This will be reviewed after 6 months when I would expect to see a significant improvement.

14. Councillor Bagaeen

The second public consultation on the City Downland Estate Plan closed on 8 July. What percentage of the city's BAME population took part in this consultation?

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

Thank you for your question.

As at 8th July 2022, 10% of the respondents to the second consultation on the City Downland Estate Plan identified as BME. The consultation has been extended to the 15th July 2022 in order to give as much time as possible for all our residents to be able to read and comment on the plan and the latest feedback/figures are currently being analysed.

Officers have worked with Trust for Developing Communities during this second consultation in order for them to both publicise and promote the consultation through their existing channels of communication. We contacted them once the decision was made to extend the consultation and they have been proactive in getting the word out, to try and get as much reach as possible. We have also met with the council's Equalities and Inclusion officer to look at ways we can increase the engagement with our BAME groups in the all-important implementation phase of the Plan. We are working on a programme for engagement with all our communities, including all our minority groups, for this stage and are looking to implement this advice and to also continue to work with the Trust for Developing Communities and the Downland Advisory Panel to ensure all groups are involved.

Feedback was received during the first consultation that more groups will want to be involved once we are at the implementation stage and discussing actual projects, as this offers more tangible changes for them and their families/communities. This engagement will therefore represent a critical element in the 'next steps' plan for the City Downland Estate Plan once endorsed by the council's Policy & Resources Committee in December and South Downs National Park Policy & Resources Board in early 2023.

15. Councillor Bagaeen

Thursday 30 June was the deadline for council staff to complete mandatory information governance, GDPR and cyber security e-learning. According to an email from the chief executive late in June, Brighton and Hove was heading towards failing to meet the required 95% compliance meaning key partners could stop sharing vital information with us impacting our ability to deliver vital services. How did we as a city end up in this situation? Who bears responsibility?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

Our end of June figure was 79% against the target of 95%. We have sought an extension of 2 months to reach to the 95% target i.e. by the end of August 2022. It is particularly important for us to reach this target for our social care IT system users within children's and adults social care – their compliance rate is currently 85%. There is an officer steering group which is supporting staff to meet this revised deadline. Feedback from the steering group is that officers feel confident that the revised deadline will be met. Officers will generate regular compliance reports to track progress.

16. Councillor Barnett

Can the Leader of the Council provide a date when staff will return to work and face to face services will resume so that residents can speak to a voice?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

It is not true to claim that council staff aren't working. Council staff have worked throughout the pandemic to support the city and maintain essential services. Many council services, such as street cleansing, refuse and recycling and home care services have continued to operate face to face throughout the pandemic while other services moved online in order to provide customer services in accordance with government guidance. The council is proud of staff that have continued to provide these essential services, and has ensured they are supported with safe methods of working during what has been a very difficult time.

Brighton Customer Experience Centre re-opened in September 2021. Hove Customer Experience Centre re-opened in April 2022. This has repeatedly been told to councilors – but something which you repeatedly ignore.

Our Hove and Brighton customer service centres are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 4.30pm. They provide support for people who need help in accessing council services or who need a computer or phone to do so. There is free internet access, computers, scanners and telephones for customers to use to contact or transact with the council. Staff are on hand to help people use these facilities. They can also advise on how best to contact particular council services either online or over the phone. All of our key services are contactable by phone

Where it is not possible for services to fulfil customer need either online or via telephone, face-to-face appointments are being provided.

There are many services where learning from the pandemic can improve customer service in the long term. For example, some of our most vulnerable residents are now able to access services digitally, and in a way that is much more convenient. In an environment where the council is seeking to deliver services in the most efficient way possible, we will use the experience of the pandemic to make long term changes that make council services such as parking or council tax easier for customers to access when and where needed using online access, whilst supporting those residents that may not be able to access services in this way.

17. Councillor Lewry

What progress has been made on the following park improvements requested:

- a) Hangleton Park (Astro turf resurfacing of the Basketball Courts)
- b) Knoll Park (New Skate Park facility)

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

Thank you for your question.

The Astro turf at Hangleton Park was repaired in February.

There is no money available at present for a new skate park facility at Knoll Park. City Parks desperately want to improve multi use games areas across the city, but no money has been identified (other than what is currently in the teams' work plan) and there is no additional capacity to take on any new projects. The team receive many requests for new skate parks and outdoor facilities, but to do this requires the capital investment and officers to deliver the works.

At the moment, the team are focusing on delivering a 3 million refurbishment programme improving play facilities across the entire city which is one of the largest investments in playgrounds anywhere in the country in recent years and demonstrates that we are prioritising the wellbeing and happiness of residents of all ages.

At the beginning of this month, Councillors agreed to submit the Kingsway to the Sea design to planning which will create a £13m park which incorporates sports facilities, including a new skate park, roller skate area and many other facilities for the whole of the city to enjoy.

18. Councillor Bell

In 2017 the Council received a £12.1 million grant from the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership for Black Rock to fund some basic public regeneration works and bring the public realm back to an acceptable standard which could be accessed by the community.

The scope of works was to include ground works to prepare the site for future uses and some renovation of the historic buildings such as the Library buildings and a new sea defence wall. There was also provision for some basic investment to make the area attractive for people to visit with public toilets, a temporary pump track, play area and seafront classroom and a board walk along the beach.

The Black Rock rejuvenation is much needed to bring to life back to this part of the city. As the Coast to Capital Partnership said five years ago when awarding Brighton and Hove City Council the grant, 'as a progressive and growing City, Brighton would benefit greatly from the regeneration of this area'.

Having received the funding, it should have been a priority for the Council to get this work delivered, but like many other projects along the seafront, including Madeira Terraces restoration, the Council has seemed slow and unable to deliver projects it has funding for or provide answers as to why the projects are not underway.

In March, five years on from this grant being awarded to the Council to conduct the works and with limited progress having been made on the ground, the council announced that it will now require an extra £3.9 million from local taxpayers to undertake it, bringing the total budget to £16 million.

The failure of the Council over so many years to regenerate this space has had a negative impact on the area, with large parts of the site looking like an industrial wasteland.

A large part of the site has been fenced off for years, attracting some of the worst graffiti in the city and acting as a physical barrier between Brighton Marina and the seafront. As the area has declined there have been problems with antisocial behaviour and the development of other social issues in the Black Rock area, including the degradation of the city's historic reading rooms and van dwellers. Many residents of the neighbouring residential areas at the Marina have felt unsafe walking around the area, particularly after dark.

Will the Leader of the Council advise:

- a) Does he feel that the Council has the capacity, skills and correct organisational structure to deliver large scale public works projects in the City?
- b) Will he personally take oversight to fix the issues that are causing delays with Madeira Terraces restoration and Black Rock Regeneration?
- c) Will lessons from the delays be learned for the rollout of future public works project, such as the Kingsway to the sea project, which received £9.5 million from the Government in the Budget last year?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

The Black Rock project is currently on site and making significant progress in transforming this important area of Brighton's seafront and has cross-party member oversight. The project has already successfully delivered its first phases of works including:

- Significant improvements to Duke's Mound including new road layout, signalling, landscaping and removal of many tons of waste & litter
- Relocation and expansion of the Local Wildlife Site with the support of Kew Garden's team: The bio-diversity net gain required from the project is a model of good practice in terms of the changes it will bring to mitigate the climate and the Bio-diversity Emergency.
- Moving the Seawall to enable a larger developable area. There was previously a complete lack of information about existing concrete structures in this area which the developer team mitigated with the completion of selective trial pits.
- Development of an 800 meter boardwalk to improve access to the beach which is open for use by the public and well received

The next phase will include the development a new access link between Black Rock and Brighton Marina, renovation of the historic Reading Rooms & Temple, and a temporary event space. The Reading Room and Temple are currently being marketed – and are attracting strong interest , the council is confident it will let well with a good income stream. Occupation is targeted for the end of October 2022.

- The Project Team is collaborating with Parks and Highways to improve landscape design and reduce the use of high carbon footprint materials ie concrete
- Technical design is almost complete on the new access and contract procurement proceeding with final phase Contract to be signed now revised design has progressed.

Members continue to be updated at the Member Working Group meetings – with overall completion of the final phase due Q2 2023.

The project has already made significant progress making physical changes to a previously run-down area of the seafront. This has involved gaining planning permission, procuring a design team and construction partners and making significant progress with works. This has been within a context of unprecedented challenges for the construction industry with the combined impact of COVID, Brexit, global supply chain disruption and now the war in Ukraine all of which together are having a significant impact on costs, availability of skills/labour and delays with materials. These pressures are affecting many construction projects in the city and council regeneration projects the length and breadth of the country.

A key issue has been that the link road package had the tender returned significantly above its anticipated cost on second tender, after attracting no interest first time around. The team have now worked with our cost consultant and preferred contractor to significantly reduce this. The project team have also worked hard to protect the costs of the other ongoing works packages to limit the increases elsewhere.

The council manages a range of major projects and is continually looking at how lessons can be learnt and improvements made. But the amount of development in the city, evidenced by the number of cranes on the skyline, show that the council has a positive attitude towards good quality development and a track record of delivering project like Circus Street – which has started winning awards. As a member of the Strategic delivery board you have the opportunity to engage in the oversight of the Black Rock as well as all major projects in the city. Given your interest in this area of work I can look forward to seeing you at the next meeting, especially since you've not been to a meeting of the Board all year.

The project is transforming Black Rock, making it a pleasant and interesting area for residents and visitors to enjoy. Regular updates are posted on the Black Rock rejuvenation web pages and residents are able to contact a Black Rock community feedback email address with any queries (blackrock@communityfeedback.co.uk).

19. Councillor Meadows

We have been told there are 3,000 drain gullies that are either blocked or damaged.

What is the current plan to clear these?

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

Thank you for your question.

There are in the region of 20,000 gullies in the city and 800 have been identified as being blocked, however this does not mean that the particular gully results in flooding as this depends on many factors. The adoption of a risk based approach means that the focus will be on those gullies with the highest risk (risk of flooding) and the city will continue to have a cyclical programme of emptying so that the risk of surface water is kept to a minimum.”

20. Councillor Nemeth

Will the Chair agree to make plans to introduce more CCTV on Ingram Crescent in Wish Ward to tackle fly-tipping?

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

Thank you for your question.

Housing have six cameras city wide, with one of these on the Ingram estate. This was positioned in the area experiencing the most fly-tipping, most of which was being driven to the site.

We recognise there is a wider problem with fly-tipping on the estate, however some of the fly-tipping hot spots are inaccessible for a CCTV camera, such as tunneled areas, so these cannot be considered. There are also further challenges with the other areas.

The most effective way of identifying fly-tippers is by use of a vehicle recognition system. Most of the fly-tipping in areas on the Ingram Estate not already covered by CCTV, is done by people bringing waste on foot, identifying them is not straight forward, we are looking at ways we can do this. If we are able to do this we will consider the Ingram estate, along with other areas when we move the cameras. This happens every six months and will next happen in October 2022. When we undertake the October review we will target areas with the highest-level fly-tipping and consider coverage city wide.

21. Councillor Peltzer Dunn

Will the Chair agree to carrying out an audit of all Councillor expenses over the past seven years?

Reply from Councillor Wilkinson, Chair of the Audit & Standards Committee

As indicated in the recent report taken at Audit & Standards Committee, the process for managing Member Allowance claims needs to be digitised. Work to implement this action has begun and this will make the audit and review of claims simpler and quicker in the future. The officer resource required to review all past Councillor paper expense claims going back 7 years would be very significant and whilst I appreciate the request, this would not be a proportionate use of resources in my view. I am keen for the Council to ensure that the officer resource we do have is now focused on implementing a robust new digitised system which all members can have confidence in going forward.

22. Councillor Simson

What plans does the Chair have to reduce traffic on Falmer Road which is now being used as a rat-run following changes to Lewes Road?

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

Thank you for your question.

There are many factors that can affect traffic flows on individual roads. The Lewes Road transport scheme was completed a number of years ago now, but there has been some significant development there since then too. We have also experienced the more recent effects of Covid-19 which has disrupted and changed many people's work and journey patterns, and increased home deliveries. This has no doubt had an effect on traffic flows on roads approaching the city.

Falmer Road is classified as a B road and therefore it is expected that it will be a key route for some drivers. It is also the only connection between the A259

and the A27 and therefore there is no alternative route for some essential journeys that have origins or destinations along the coast and further inland.

I totally agree that we need to reduce traffic levels as a priority, as our city has limited roadspace for people and vehicles. This would lead to better air quality, less carbon emissions, quieter streets and safer roads – all of which will help our communities to lead better and healthier lives. Active travel, public transport and cleaner vehicles all have a role to play in providing transport options for everybody's daily journeys, whether local or longer distance. We have just secured almost £28 million pounds to improve local bus services in the next few years, and work together with train operating companies. We are delivering more infrastructure for walking, cycling and wheeling, and we will deliver a new contract for the BikeShare scheme. Our electric vehicle charging programme is one of the best in the country in terms of access to that infrastructure. How we manage parking and improve our traffic management using technology, using smart traffic signals and our Transport Control Centre, also helps with the efficient movement of people and vehicles.

We are therefore doing what we can to enable change, but ultimately that change has to come from people's individual and collective decisions, whether travelling from home, for work or for leisure. The council's current programme of transport initiatives and investment, and the future objectives of the next Local Transport Plan, will inform and enable people to make decisions about:-

- 1) whether or not they need to travel;
- 2) whether or not they can shift some or most of their journeys to more sustainable and environmentally forms of transport if they do need to travel; and
- 3) using a cleaner vehicle, when motorised vehicles are needed for essential journeys.

Those decisions will make the differences that are necessary to reduce traffic flows across the city, including Falmer Road. The city is a popular place and many journeys start or finish outside the city and therefore the actions of our neighbouring local authorities and their communities will also have an effect on transport and traffic here. We need to work together on this to deliver the changes that you and many others want to see on local roads, so if you have suggestions about what we could in your area to reduce traffic, I would be happy to hear them.

23. Councillor Pissaridou

I was very surprised to receive this from a local GP. It is a much needed and valuable thing to do. Can we join please?

"I am a GP at Mile Oak Medical Centre and I was looking forward to joining my practice to this national Breastfeeding Welcome scheme. But after doing all the work needed to join, I've found out that Brighton and Hove council is not involved in the scheme. I think that's a real shame as breastfeeding is so important for mothers, children and the sustainability of the planet. Please could you look into signing the city up to the scheme so that many venues and GP surgeries are able to join and support increasing our cities breastfeeding rates?"

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

The most recent published data showed Brighton & Hove had the highest rate of breastfeeding initiation in the South-East, however we are always seeking to improve on this so continue to work with partner organisations to promote the benefits of breastfeeding and support families locally.

Public Health will present a scoping paper on the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme to the Early Help Partnership Board in October. This is a multi-agency group which includes representatives from the Council, NHS and Community & Voluntary Sector.

24. Councillor Bagaeen:

Why are there no council open vacancies for street cleansing and weeds removal on Blue Arrow? The advert closed on 7 July.

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

There are open vacancies for Street/Beach/Weeding Operatives on Blue Arrow Website. (https://www.bluearrow.co.uk/jobs/jo220733485_1657525755-streetbeachweeding-operatives?currency=GBP&keywords=weeding)

Jobs are advertised across numerous different job boards and they are refreshed continuously. The feedback the Council has received is that the candidate pool is very sparse due to the Brexit and the ending of freedom of movement. We are offering a competitive rate for this level of role, however there is a shortage of candidates at the moment. This is not just affecting Brighton & Hove City Council, there is a national labour shortage.