

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The following questions listed on pages 61–64 of the agenda have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answer detailed below. The Councillor asking the question may then ask one relevant supplementary question which shall be put and answered without discussion. A second supplementary question may be asked by any other Member of the Council which shall also be put and answered without discussion:

(a) Councillor Carden

“Can the Cabinet Member of Environment confirm that assisted collections of waste for older and disabled people are continuing to be updated and adhered to when relief crews are sent to collect refuse and recycling?”

Reply from Councillor G Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

“I can confirm that we do update our records when we receive a request for an assisted collection service from a resident.

(b) Councillor Meadows

“Before 1996 when highways were under the control of East Sussex County Council, there was a by-law that allowed for police and council traffic officers to remove cars parked on grass verges. Would Brighton and Hove City Council look into reinstating this by-law so that it could also include cycle lanes, as well as grass verges?”

Reply from Councillor G Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

“Thank you for your question. Whilst I do not believe there has ever been a by-law in place dealing with these offences, there is the Local Act known as The East Sussex Act 1981 which does allow the Council to prosecute in the Magistrates Court for the offence of driving over a verge. To enforce under this legislation would be slow and costly. There are a number of reasons for this, including the need for witness evidence of the offence actually taking place. Similarly, to introduce, monitor and enforce a new by-law would be resource intensive.

There are other avenues that we can now consider with the introduction in 2008 of the Traffic Management Act. We can already enforce where there are double or single yellow lines in place. Where these restrictions are not in place, it would be possible to look at introducing a new Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting parking on the verge and over cycle lanes. This could be enforced by Civil Enforcement Officers using the existing infrastructure already in place. There would, however, be a cost to doing this as officers would need to complete the TRO process, including advertisements and consultation and would need to purchase and erect the approved signage.

(c) Councillor Hawkes

"Would the Cabinet Member for Children's Services welcome the Government scheme to provide free laptops and internet to children from low income families - I'm aware that some schools have sent information to families that have children that benefit from free school meals regarding free laptops, but please may the Cabinet Member confirm that this is the case for all schools?"

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

"Home Access is a government programme that helps eligible low-income families to buy a computer and internet access to support learning at home. The programme is for families in England.

To apply for a Home Access Grant, you must be a parent or guardian responsible for and living with a child who:

- is in school years 3 to 9 (normally aged 7-14)
- has never had a computer from Computers For Pupils or the Home Access programme
- is eligible for Free School Meals, and
- is named on the Child Benefit award letter.

Headteachers were briefed by Officers about this scheme. They were sent a follow up letter and a letter to send to parents. The take up is being monitored by a government organisation, BECTA, and we know that to date 23% of eligible families have applied. Officers will remind Headteachers about the scheme during the next round of briefings."

(d) Councillor Mitchell

"In response to concerns from East Brighton Ward Councillors over the lack of action to regenerate Madeira Drive, Councillor Geoffrey Theobald brought a report to his Environment Cabinet Member Meeting in September 2008 that stated that longer term aims for the regeneration of the area would be drawn up.

A similar report to his Cabinet Member Meeting of 26th March 2009 included as recommendation 2.3;

That the Cabinet Member for Environment requests officers to bring to a future Cabinet Member Meeting a report detailing the strategic vision action plan to address the future and ongoing regeneration of Madeira Drive.

Specifically in relation to the land to the East of the Yellowwave Beach Sports Centre, Councillor Theobald took the decision at this meeting to set out a marketing brief for the site, to proceed with the marketing, seeking expressions of interest in May 2009.

As no further reports on the administration's proposals for the regeneration of Madeira Drive have been forthcoming, will Councillor Theobald inform the council as to where the administration's "strategic vision action plan" is, whether the site East of Yellowwave was ever marketed and what the outcome was?"

Reply from Councillor G Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

"There have been improvements along Madeira Drive following years of neglect. For example new lighting has been installed under the terraces between Concord 2 and the Volks railway which has improved safety for both staff and customers using Yellowwave at night. £230,000 was allocated last year for spending on structural repairs and restoration works to the terraces and the Madeira Lift and this work will continue in the next financial year. A further £150,000 has been allocated specifically to the terraces and an additional £100,000 per annum for the ongoing maintenance of railings, shelters and benches along the entire length of the Seafront.

An architect has been appointed and has submitted a concept proposal for replacement siding sheds at the Volks Railway. Vacant properties along Madeira Drive and the lower promenade are currently being marketed, these include new artist units just to the East of Palace Pier.

The sites to the East of Yellowwave are occupied by the Adventure Golf and Grace's Place Café. Both tenants have submitted planning applications for substantial investment into their facilities. The newly appointed Seafront Development Manager is looking at schemes for the Peter Pan site.

This Administration is committed to improving the entire seafront hence the additional resources that we proposed at the recent Budget Council Meeting."

(e) Councillor Davis

"Please could the Cabinet Member for Environment outline the details and the time scale he proposes for the budget of £.03m set aside to examine and implement improved school signing along the Old Shoreham Road?"

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

"The locations of the new signs are now being drawn up, and it is proposed that the scheme will be completed by the end of this calendar year."

(f) Councillor Elgood

“Would the Environment Cabinet member consider authorising the removal of the unused gardeners hut in Adelaide Crescent? Residents have requested its removal as it is no longer required, and the hut itself could potentially be used elsewhere to benefit another area.”

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

“I am pleased to state that the gardeners hut will be removed by the end of May.”

(g) Councillor Hamilton

“In a letter in The Argus, Feb.25th, signed by the five Conservative councillors for Portslade and Hangleton, it is claimed that my view on the future of Hangleton Bottom is the same as theirs. I am pleased that they share my view that Hangleton Bottom should not be used as a waste transfer station but should be retained as a green field site. Since all Portslade and Hangleton councillors now share this viewpoint will Cllr Fallon-Khan now call a halt to his ill-advised marketing exercise and agree to retain Hangleton Bottom in council ownership?”

Reply from Councillor Fallon-Khan, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

“Hangleton Bottom is not being sold. This preliminary evaluation of interest in the site is being undertaken as a direct result of the decision by the previous Administration in 2005 to designate Hangleton Bottom in the Joint East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Waste Local Plan and the Brighton & Hove Local Plan. Once this exercise has been concluded the results will be communicated to residents for their consideration and opinions. However, I repeat, Hangleton Bottom is not being sold.”

(h) Councillor Kitcat

“How long does Cllr Dee Simson feel it is appropriate disabled residents should have to wait to catch a taxi in this city?”

Reply from Councillor Simson, Cabinet Member for Community Affairs, Inclusion and Internal Relations.

“It is inappropriate for disabled residents to have to wait any longer than an able bodied person would have to in the same circumstances. That is why the Administration is currently undertaking a thorough equality impact assessment on the taxi and private hire service”.

(i) Councillor Kitcat

"I ask that Cllr Geoffrey Theobald update the meeting with the recycling rates for the city centre areas where communal bins are used and how those rates have changed in recent years?"

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

"I think I have answered this question before. We have the recycling rate for the whole city - which for 2008/09 was 29.2%, this is an increase from 28.7% in 2007/08 and from 26.7% in 2006/07 – it is not broken down area by area."

(j) Councillor Kitcat

"I ask that Cllr Geoffrey Theobald explain how many evening noise patrol shifts does the council provide in this financial year and how many shifts are planned to be provided in the next financial year?"

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

"Deployment of staff to meet statutory duties is delegated to officers at budget holder level. Officers aim to provide a responsive noise patrol service on Friday and Saturday nights throughout the year".

(k) Councillor Fryer

"How can you justify submitting plans to the DCSF to turn Portslade Community College into an Academy before there was consultation with teachers, residents and other councillors?"

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

"Informal discussions took place with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors of Portslade Community College prior to the submission of a Statement of Intent to the Office for the Schools Commissioner. There are no formal proposals as yet but Ministerial agreement to the Statement of Intent is necessary before the Council develops a formal Expression of Interest. Should Ministerial approval be secured, there will then be a 30 day period of consultation with staff, governors, and parents at the college and other stakeholders from the community. The results of this consultation will be reported to Cabinet who will determine whether an Expression of Interest is submitted to the DCSF.

The consultation will be about a proposal for Portslade Community College to become an academy.

The need for structural change was agreed with the National Challenge agency, the Office of the schools commissioner (OSC), Partnership for Schools (PfS) and the DCSF. Options put to the council by DCSF were closure, federation with a high performing institution, becoming a National Challenge Trust School, or becoming an academy.

In discussion with the National Challenge agency, the Office of the schools commissioner (OSC), Partnership for Schools (PfS) and the DCSF the council believes that the academy route would best satisfy the external demands on the council and provide the best outcome from the options available, in order to secure a transformation in standards and investment in refurbishing the existing accommodation.”

(l) Councillor Davey

“Could the Leader of the Council please tell us how much has been spent in total by the council on the development of plans and the public consultation for the Old Shoreham Road cycle lane including both internal staff costs and external consultants as well as any other costs.?”

Reply from Councillor Mears, Leader of the Council.

“It is hard to identify precise figures for the cycle lane scheme alone because the work undertaken, and therefore money spent, was also integral to the proposed road safety measures along Old Shoreham Road. However if Councillor Davey has a question about a specific financial aspect of the work I will endeavour to provide him with an answer.”

(m) Councillor Simson

“As Brighton & Hove City Council’s sole representative on the Sussex Police Authority (SPA), Cllr. Duncan frequently claims to have been instrumental in overseeing an increase in the number of Neighbourhood Police Officers employed by the Force. Could he, therefore, explain to Council and the residents of this City, why, at the SPA meeting on February 11th, he voted against the Chief Constable’s budget proposals which will expand neighbourhood policing in Sussex to the tune of 31 extra officers?”

Reply from Councillor Duncan, Council Representative on the Sussex Police Authority.

“Thank you for the question. As Cllr Simson will know, I am a tireless champion of neighbourhood policing – and particularly the employment of more Neighbourhood Police Officers here in Brighton and Hove. It’s a shame she hasn’t had time to attend a meeting of Sussex Police Authority herself – they are all open to the public – to hear my views in full during any of the many debates we have had on the subject.

But in a nutshell the proposed Sussex Police Budget contained one cut too many – both as a result of the wishes of some Conservative members of the authority, and the Labour Government’s derisory grant for policing in Sussex, and I just don’t believe you can cut your way out of a recession, or maintain a first-class police service in the face of a £35m cash shortfall. Members who wish a fuller explanation for the way I cast my vote can see the budget debate in full at:

http://www.sussexpolice.ukcouncil.net/site/player/pl_compact.php?a=36554&t=0&m=wm&l=en_GB “

(n) Councillor Hawkes

“ Will Cllr Dee Simson confirm that the three new Youth Outreach pilots for 8 – 13yr olds will be located in the most deprived wards in the city according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 from the DCLG?”

Reply from Councillor Simson, Cabinet Member for Community Affairs, Inclusion and Internal Relations.

“As Cllr Hawkes will be aware, it was agreed by the Leader of the Council to set up a cross party working group to oversee the pilot projects. That working group has not yet met, therefore it is premature to say how and where those pilot projects might be based.”

