

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:

(a) Councillor Bell

“In light of the recent blunder by the Planning Department which has led to a 12.5 metre mast being erected next to a school and historic site in my Ward of Woodingdean, would the Chair of Planning Committee please explain how such an error has been allowed to happen and how many other known instances there have been if, as it has been reported, there are no checks to ensure that applicants have receipt of their planning decisions within the time period?”

Hollow apologies, from the Administration are a distraction to a systemic failure within the planning department and despite emails and phone calls we still are unable to inform our residents of what action this Administration is going to take to rectify their mistake. I respectfully request urgent action and response to this question.”

Reply from Councillor Cattell – Chair of the Planning Committee**(b) Councillor Wares**

“Recently in the Argus, the Chair of Environment, Transport and Sustainability commented on her sadness at the decline of our parks and open spaces in the wake of £600,000 savings required to Cityparks’ budget over the next 3 years. What is of greater sadness is the misrepresentation of this figure. According to the Council’s budget papers, Citypark’s overall budget for the next 3 years is gross £11,061,000 of which £7,743,000 is for parks and open spaces. The actual overall saving proposed for the 3 years is £430,000. £200,000 saving against the parks budget which is proposed as a cut in service and £230,000 saving against leisure and allotments dealt with by increasing charges and fees. Conservation and arboriculture’s budget are unchanged.

Therefore, over the next 3 years, the parks and open spaces budget reduction is £200,000; nothing like Cllr Mitchell’s £600,000.

Over the same 3 year period, the traveller budget is £1,839,000 of which a saving of £133,000 is proposed. The City has seen a reduction in unauthorised encampments following the £2.4m traveller site development that was supplemented with £700,000 of Council tax money coupled with the Police now responding swiftly to end them and PSPOs coming into force later this year.

Rather than Cllr Mitchell continuing with her proposed reduction in Cityparks’ budget of £430,000, will she now inform us how much she intends to re-allocate

from the over-funded traveller budget towards Cityparks, and how much she anticipates this will reduce her sadness and increase our residents' happiness?"

Reply from Councillor Mitchell – Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(c) Councillor Mac Cafferty

Preventing flash floods: Rooftops study

A roof audit study in 2014* found that there was 87 football pitches' worth of new green roof space in the city centre of Brighton and Hove.

The equivalent of up to 100 Olympic swimming pools of water could be held back from the city's roads and drains which could have a significant effect in reducing flooding and the need for infrastructure. Over 2 megawatt hours (MWh) of electricity could be saved every year on cooling costs for buildings – via reduced or avoided air conditioning.

Greening roofs would also reduce the so-called 'Urban Heat Island Effect', potentially providing an additional saving in cooling costs in the city of 1.3million kWh per annum, as well as decreased carbon dioxide emissions. New green roofs create new habitats for plant and animal species and help building energy efficiency.

Can the Chair of the Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee advise on what work is being done by the Administration to bring this important study to fruition.

[*https://building-green.org.uk/2015/01/24/huge-potential-for-green-roofs-to-improve-the-centre-of-brighton/](https://building-green.org.uk/2015/01/24/huge-potential-for-green-roofs-to-improve-the-centre-of-brighton/)

Reply from Councillor Cattell – Chair of the Planning Committee

(d) Councillor Mac Cafferty

Free and accessible water in Brighton and Hove

Single-use plastic bottles expend finite natural resources, they also create transport and waste. As a seaside city, single-use plastic bottles and bottle tops add to sea pollution: 8 million tonnes of plastic waste enter the sea from land each year. Plastic bottled water is also excessively expensive for the consumer.

The public health benefits of water are widely acknowledged; 1.6 litres of water are needed a day to avoid dehydration. The Refill Project established in Bristol in 2015 works by having free and accessible tap water provided in venues across the city centre. Over 200 participating venues such as cafes, bars, restaurants, banks, galleries, museums and other businesses simply promote their participation. The public has access to free tap water.

Can the Chair of the Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee advise if the Administration will investigate the idea and bring forward a report to committee?

Reply from Councillor Mitchell – Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(e) Councillor Mac Cafferty

Can the Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee outline what information housing officers are now legally permitted to routinely collect on tenants?

Reply from Councillor Meadows – Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

(f) Councillor Taylor

“The works to Westdene Library agreed as part of the Libraries Plan are now some 2 months behind schedule. Will Councillor Hamilton please tell me how this will impact on the savings in the Libraries service budget for 2016/17?”

Reply from Councillor Hamilton – Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee

