



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

HOUSING & NEW HOMES COMMITTEE ADDENDUM (Amended)

4.00PM, WEDNESDAY, 13 JUNE 2018

HOVE TOWN HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBER - HOVE TOWN HALL

ADDENDUM (amended to include second deputation)

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WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting for questions submitted by members of the public who either live or work in the area of the authority.

i) The following written question has been received from Jane Thorp.

Park Court

“Residents at Park Court flats were given an estimate for a replacement roof in 2014 of £30,000. In 2018, the work is being done and the cost is £70,000. How is it that a cost can rise by more than 100% in such a short space of time?”

ii) The following question has been received from John Hadman

Solar Panels on Council Property

Households across the UK had money added to their energy bill to be used to improve efficiency of homes.

I would like to know when a council property or home is built or improved, why solar panels are not put in place.

This would provide many savings, lowering energy bills for tenants and lowering energy bills for the running of council properties. Hove Town Hall is one example of a recent renovation which has not taken the opportunity to reinstall solar panels.

What are the Councils plans around ensuring this money and environment saving solution is taken up and how are such plans to be an integral part of the HRA Energy strategy?”

iii) The following written question has been received from David Croydon.

Housing computer system

“May I ask why the IT procurement report does not mention the fact that a software professional of some 40 years experience, along with another tenant also with some decades experience, offered to help in the scoping of the new system through the Business & Value for Money SIG and that this input was refused?”

iv) The following written question has been received from Steve Parry.

Independent review of existing partnering contract for housing repairs, maintenance, planned and major works

“This report and the full publication of the 31ten report are to be welcomed. There are, however, questions (of many) that require attention at this stage; will the Committee agree

- That discussion at this meeting is the start of a process that involves the widest possible number of residents, councillors, and experts with a final response made at a future meeting?”

v) The following written question has been received from Clare Hudson.

The future of repairs and maintenance of council properties

“This report provides the remarkable and eye-opening revelation that “The primary options detailed in the report are set out as follows:

Direct delivery of the services

Outsourcing

Wholly-Owned Subsidiary/Managed Service model

Joint Venture Company”

Would it be possible to explain why consultants are paid to tell councillors and residents something of which they are aware and why this agenda item is not part of item 11?”

vi) The following written question has been received from Kenny Lloyd.

Borrowing to build

“Could the committee please explain why a potential £30 million permitted within the amount allowed by the current government limits is not being accessed by B&HCC?”

vii) The following written question has been received from Daniel Harris.

Evictions from Emergency Accommodation

“Could you confirm the breakdown showing the accommodation providers responsible for the following evictions?”

1. 1/4/17–30/6/17 (Reported 7 cases) and the same for previous period. (Reported 9 cases)

2. 1/7/17 –30/9/17 - (Reported 7 cases) and the same for previous period. (Reported 8 cases)

3. 1/10/17 –31/12/17 - (Reported 9 cases) and the same for previous period. (Reported 12 cases)

4. 1/1/18 –31/3/18 - (Reported 10 cases) and the same for previous period. (Reported 21 cases)

Of these eviction cases how many have registered disabilities? Could you also explain why the Bat Tree is not included the report?”

viii) The following written question has been received from Maria Garrett-Gotch

Malnutrition among residents in temporary and emergency accommodation

“At the committee meeting on 14 March 2018 a question was asked regarding cases of malnutrition of residents in temporary and emergency accommodation provided by B&HCC or agencies contracted by the Council? The response was

that “The Housing Needs Team has had no reports of malnutrition amongst residents in temporary and emergency accommodation”

I understand that the council is now aware of such cases. Could the Chairperson explain what action is being taken to remedy this situation?”

ix) The following written question has been received from Barry Hughes

Sheltered Accommodation/ Allocations Policy

“At one time tenants in the council’s sheltered schemes could move when vacancies occurred. Recently a scheme tenant on the third floor (who was unwell) heard that a ground floor flat had become vacant. Upon enquiring if she could move to the ground floor she was told to apply via the Homemove scheme. She was unsuccessful.

Allocations Scheme changes in 2016 included “10% council interests”. Would the Committee please rule that moves within a community qualify under this change, thus allowing tenants to identify a vacant property and apply to move to that property without going through the Homemove process?”

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Committee for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which one Member of the Council, nominated by the Mayor, may speak in response. It shall then be moved by the Mayor and voted on without discussion that the deputation be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

Notification of one Deputation has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

(1) Deputation concerning Bristol Estate**Spokesperson David Croydon**

Supported by:

David Croydon
Charlotte Rogers
David Green
Michael Bushby
Madeleine Sailani
Keith Marston
Ghebrat Kahsay
Violeta Belogaska
Shula Rich
Alan Bryan
Barbara Roberts
Stewart Gillies

Ward affected: East Brighton

(2) Deputation from the Living Rent Campaign on using borrowing available to build truly affordable council housing**Spokesperson Michael Fitzpatrick**

Supported by:

Diane Montgomery
Sheila Rimmer
Caroline Hinds
John Hadman
Duncan Moore

Wards Affected: All

(1) Deputation - Bristol Estate

Brighton and Hove City Council leaseholders and tenants throughout the City, particularly in blocks of flats, have been subject to costly major works that in some cases is of poor quality and unnecessary. Individual leaseholders have been presented with demands for payment of sums in excess of £30,000 with similar sums being paid from the Housing Revenue Account for each property.

'Justice for Tenants', an affiliate of the Brighton and Hove Housing Coalition, is aware of residents who have lost their homes or have sold at a loss. Others have suffered serious health issues as a result of the stress or the effect of the work on their day to day living conditions.

The Council has spent tens of thousands of pounds on aggressive legal action against all leaseholders in 5 blocks (known as "phase 2") on the Bristol Estate.

At the initial hearing of the Tribunal, as well as beforehand, the leaseholders urged the council to meet with them to discuss grievances or to go to mediation. Many were still involved in following the council's own disputes procedure. At the hearing the presiding Judge highlighted the mediation facilities available. The Council representative refused to talk, to go to mediation, or even to complete the council's own local dispute procedure.

We urge councillors to make every effort to discuss the present dispute with leaseholders and request that officers be instructed to exhaust the BHCC dispute process and mediation prior to any tribunal hearing

(2) Deputation from the Living Rent Campaign on using the borrowing available to build truly affordable council housing

Given that the council has only used a quarter of the money available under the HRA borrowing cap in the last 3 years the living rent campaign are urging housing committee to "get on with it" and use this large resource of over £30 million that is still available to tackle the cities housing crisis.

We are dismayed to discover that an average of only £3.5 million net borrowing has been used over the last 3 years from a potential of £40 million. It is no good campaigning to raise our borrowing cap, if the council don't use the borrowing already allowed up to the cap limits!

Over the last 20 years, on average, around 80 council homes a year have been lost to the right to buy in Brighton and Hove and it is vital that these homes are not only replaced, but more are made available.

There are over 15,000 households on the waiting list. Brighton has the 2nd highest number of rough sleepers in the whole country and 1 in 69 people are rough sleeping or in temporary homeless accommodation. Homelessness is being fuelled by high private sector rents. An average 2 bed private rented flat is estimated to cost around £15,500 a year which swallows about 60 % of the median income of households living and working in the city. People are being driven out of the city they grew up in. Low income households urgently need new homes at Living rents and social rents and only the council will be able to do this

The number of affordable homes provided in Brighton and Hove has dropped from 239 in 2014/15 to an estimated 131 for 2017/18 and as housing associations do less, the council is increasingly central to providing affordable homes for the city. It must get its act together better.

It is a scandal that as of the 1st of April this year the council still has over £30 million available to put toward building new homes. The council are sitting on a goldmine we urge you to show the will and competence to get on and spend this money over the next 2 years. If you don't the people of Brighton will not forgive you.

