

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

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

**(1) Councillor: Ebel**

The council is currently replacing the old seafront bins with new ones. After the transition period, what is the council intending to do with the old seafront bins? Can the old bins be re-purposed and placed across the city in places where there is a need for additional bins? Is there any consultation planned for the future use of the old seafront bins that the public and the councillors can engage in?

Given that there are many overflowing bins across the city and that many residents have to walk long distances to reach their nearest bin, it would be a positive step to re-allocate the old seafront bins quickly to ease one of the city's most pressing issues.

**Reply from Councillor Pissaridou, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

The bins that are to be removed from the seafront will be reused elsewhere. Only bins that are unusable i.e. beyond repair will be thrown away. For additional bins, we would need to consider the locations of where they are to be placed to ensure they can be incorporated into existing routes for emptying.

We are not intending to carry out a consultation on the future use of seafront bins. If residents and councillors have suggestions, we welcome their ideas. Litter bins are provided at regular intervals depending on the footfall in an area. If residents and councillors have suggestions, we welcome their ideas.

For the concrete bins on the seafront, these will be repurposed as flower pots as we cannot move them.

**(2) Councillor Ebel**

In the last few months we have been contacted by several residents who are concerned about the welfare of the animals used for racing at the Brighton and Hove Greyhound Stadium.

How many incidents where animals were injured or have died as a result of the sport have occurred at the Brighton and Hove Greyhound Stadium in the last year?

**Reply from Councillor Robins – Chair of the Tourism, Development & Culture Committee.**

The local authority does not have responsibility for the care or welfare of greyhounds at Corals stadium. Racing tracks are monitored by the Greyhound Board of Great Britain. They write the guidelines for the industry nationally and ensure welfare standards.

As the regulator for greyhound racing in Great Britain, they are responsible for the welfare of all registered racing greyhounds – from registration to retirement.

Each year they publish national injury and retirement data for licensed stadia, of which Brighton and Hove is one. They advise that injury rates continue to be the lowest independently verified figures in the world and, they state on their website ‘through our Greyhound Commitment, which was launched in 2018, we are determined to reduce these still further.’

They also state that independent Veterinary Surgeons are present at all GBGB licensed tracks to check the health and wellbeing of every greyhound both before and after racing, and to provide emergency care in the event that any dog needs it.

Data from their website states that in 2018 426,139 runs and of these 4,963 were injured and 242 were fatalities. However the data available is not broken down to specific tracks.

### **(3) Councillor Hills**

My residents want to know answers to the following:

- (a) When improvements to recycling in the city will be made.
- (b) When will the range of items collected be widened to include recyclable plastics other than bottles?
- (c) When might their recycling be collected weekly?
- (d) When will the waiting list for food waste collections be reduced?

#### **Reply from Councillor Pissaridou, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

##### **(a) When improvements to recycling in the city will be made.**

The council has established an Increasing Recycling Project. This includes increasing awareness of reducing, reusing and recycling for residents across Brighton & Hove.

An A-Z has been published on the council website to advise residents on how to reduce, reuse, recycle or dispose of almost 180 different materials. This is a live resource which will be amended as more opportunities to reduce, reuse and recycle become available. Videos to support how to reduce, reuse and recycle are being developed and posted on social media.

New on-the-go street waste and recycling bins are being rolled-out along the sea front from Hove Lagoon to Saltdean. This new bin will enable beach and seafront users to recycle plastic, cans and glass. The bins will have distinct colours that will become our recycling colour coding system across the city in

the future. This should help to increase recycling rates and reduce levels of contamination by avoiding confusion. If these bins are well received and successful in helping us to recycle more we could look to extend their roll out across the city and in parks as funds allow. The rollout of recycling wheelie bins has started following the wheelie bin audit and it is hoped this will increase the capacity for residents to recycle more.

**(b) When will the range of items collected be widened to include recyclable plastics other than bottles?**

In Brighton & Hove we recycle all plastic bottles and it is not currently known when or whether other plastics will be collected. Other plastics, commonly known as PTTs, such as Pots and Tubs and Trays are made from a much cheaper grade plastic than bottles including PET (polyethylene terephthalate), PP (polypropylene), PS (polystyrene) and PVC (polyvinyl chloride). There is currently a market for PP and this makes up about 22% of PTTs. However, there are no clear end-markets for the remaining 78% of these types of plastics.

Developing the capacity to sort these different materials into marketable and non-marketable would require considerable investment at the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Hollingdean.

Further to this, there is a risk that once collected and sorted, exported plastics are being diverted to landfill elsewhere in the world. Although we may not collect PTTs to recycle and our recycling rate is fairly low at 30%, we know for sure where all the plastics we collect go, and we know they do not end up in landfill here or in a poor country.

**(c) When might their recycling be collected weekly?**

We are currently starting a review of the service and assessing the structure of collection rounds. The frequency of collections will be developed as part of this piece of work and recommendations will be made to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee, for approval.

It is acknowledged, there are positive reasons to move to weekly recycling, such as improving the city's recycling rates and initial research indicates councils across the country have moved to this model. However, the review will determine the options to be proposed, with a report being presented to committee early next year.

**(d) When will the waiting list for food waste collections be reduced?**

We do not offer a food waste collection service but fruit, vegetable peelings and coffee grounds can be included in garden waste bins.

We are currently working to increase capacity of garden waste collections, however do not have a defined timescale for when this is likely, due to current service pressures.

The council encourages residents to compost at home and provides subsidised compost bins and food waste composters. Since 2007, over 20,000 compost

bins have been sold through the council's scheme, further information of which is on the [council's website](#). The council also funds 37 community composting schemes in the city in partnership with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership.

**(4) Councillor Davis**

Since its introduction to our city the 20mph limit has helped to reduce fatalities and accidents but it could have a much bigger effect. Car ownership increases every month and with that drivers are using our rat run side streets like race tracks. I receive regular complaints from residents in my ward about the dangers and problems caused by speeding motorists.

What work is the Administration pursuing with Sussex Police to ensure 20mph is enforced?

**Reply from Councillor Pissaridou, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Brighton & Hove City Council worked closely with Sussex Police during the implementation of the city wide 20mph limit and only implemented the limits where it was supported by them however, it was on the understanding that there would be no expectation of further enforcement of those limits over and above what was already being done. This is still the case so there is a reliance on the Council continuing to influence further enforcement through its role as a member of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and on the general public to help report incidents of anti- social driving generally through a Police website [www.operationcrackdown.org](http://www.operationcrackdown.org)

If it is found that via this medium there are repeat offenders then they will be targeted by Sussex Police and ultimately could have their vehicle destroyed.

**(5) Councillor Hugh-Jones**

I understand the Council recently awarded its Public Toilet Cleansing and Maintenance Contract to a new contractor, Healthmatic Limited. A ward resident has raised a number of issues specifically about the toilets in Blakers Park, i.e. that they:

1. Are frequently closed during the winter months (resulting in children defecating in the nearby bushes)
2. Staff who do visit are not reporting problems (including damage to the fabric of the building)
3. Contain offensive graffiti (including a swastika) and tags
4. Are filthy.

Given these concerns could you tell me

(a) What system is in place to manage and monitor the performance of the new contractor and

(b) Whether the level of service has been deliberately cut out of financial considerations?

## **Reply from Councillor Pissaridou, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

The new public toilet contract commenced in 2017. Blakers Park toilets are not open during the winter months; they are open from Good Friday to 30 September as per the contract. Cleaning staff visit twice a day and it is inspected twice a month. We are not aware of any particular issues. The Contract Manager recently made a spot visit and the site was in a clean condition.

We have reported the graffiti to the graffiti removal team and will have it removed as soon as possible. I am sorry that you found these toilets in a poor state. We will be raising this with the contractor and will be carrying out further inspections.

The service level is managed via monthly contract meetings and ad hoc inspections. The level of service has not been cut recently.

### **(6) Councillor Clare**

Would the Administration like to congratulate Love George Street and the Red Box Project Brighton on their successful roll out of 'red boxes' to all schools in Brighton and Hove?

## **Reply from Councillor Childs, Chair of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee.**

I would like to thank Councillor Clare for giving me the opportunity to express the Administration's thanks and appreciation for the work that has been carried out by Red Box and its sponsors, one of whom is 'Love George Street'.

By way of background, The Red Box Project is a community-based, not-for-profit initiative, which aims to support young people throughout their periods by providing red boxes filled with free period products to local schools. 'One child in ten cannot afford sanitary products and situation that has worsened as a result of central government policy to impose austerity on our poorest communities. Lack of access to sanitary products can lead to a loss of education, loss of confidence, loss of dignity and the loss of self respect'. Research shows that girls miss school because they do not have access to sanitary products.

Love George Street is among those organisations who have supported the campaign by hosting red 'donation Boxes' at locations in the area.

This initiative was discussed at the Full Council meeting in July 2018, when the administration lent its support to the initiation of the Red Box scheme in Brighton & Hove. Since then we have been delighted to see the growth of this scheme and we are very pleased that we now have donation boxes across the city and a Red Box in every school in Brighton & Hove. Work has also been going on at a national level and the government has pledged to supply sanitary products to all Primary and Secondary schools across the UK in early 2020.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this important scheme that makes such a difference to young people in our city.

**(7) Councillor Clare**

The road layout around the floral clock roundabout leading into St Johns Road is at an angle which is dangerous to both pedestrians and road users alike due to the angle of entry. In addition, the business owners by the entrance would like some additional space for outdoor seating and for the location of the recycling point to be moved.

What could be done to make this area safer and more friendly to all who need to access it?

**Reply from Councillor Pissaridou, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

A site visit was carried out earlier this year with colleagues from Cityclean joining a member of our Road Safety Team to discuss the issue of the communal bins at this location. At this time a Restaurateur also joined in who owned one of the restaurants adjacent to the communal bins.

At this meeting the issue of the number of bins was brought up and also the siting of them was discussed. Our colleagues from Cityclean explained that there was a need for all the bins as they not only take waste but also recycling. It was felt that putting the bins on the centre island was not appropriate as anyone using them would have to cross a busy carriageway and not everyone has the necessary road sense to do so safely whereas it has to be assumed that anyone taking a hire bike would have. The location itself was purpose built quite a long time ago and over this period, from a road safety and cleansing view, has worked very well.

It is further understood that the proprietor of the restaurant would also like the parking reviewed and he has been advised to contact colleagues in Parking Infrastructure to look into this.

The issue of the physical layout of the entrance has also been looked at but, as you are probably aware, we have very limited budgets now available to us so we have to prioritise where we spend our funds. At the moment we have a high risk site ranking system where we prioritise spending based on the number and severity of collisions around junctions. I am pleased to say that this junction does not feature on this list as there have been no injury causing collisions in the past three years, however, because it has such a good record I am afraid that we cannot allocate any of our scarce resources at this time.

I realise this is not the answers that your constituents would want but trust that it does explain why there is little that we can do.

**(8) Councillor Mac Cafferty - Community safety**

Will the Administration lead for community safety write to the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner asking:

- when the precept increase from council tax bills this year will be used to recruit police and PCSOs, as promised, and
- will we have PCSOs attending community Local Action Team meetings as routine once again?

**Reply from Councillor Knight, Chair of the Neighbourhoods, Inclusion, Communities & Equalities Committee**

Thank you for your question. As you probably know, on 08 February 2019 the Police and Crime Panel agreed the proposals of the PCC to increase the council tax precept for 2019/20 by £24 (14.47%) on a band D property. This increase is within the referendum limits set by Government.

The PCC report states that this will provide more funding to support more officers and a better policing service and the additional resource will enable:

- 100 more Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) - to prevent and respond to crime, including more named PCSOs to ensure a consistent point of contact for local communities. This additional resource to enable:
- 50% more PCSOs out in communities, increasing visible policing support, including in rural areas.
- Greater capacity to work with partners and leverage their support to address local issues.
- Better engagement through social media with dedicated 'digital' PCSOs keeping vulnerable people safe online.
- More capacity to support vulnerable people and minority communities—addressing hidden crime.
- Improvement in local police/public relations and an increased capability to gather community intelligence.
- Improved ability to solve problems – deterring crime and tackling anti-social behaviour.
- 50 More Police Officers and 50 more specialist staff to be deployed as follows:
- To prevent more deaths and serious injuries on our roads, through recruiting additional roads policing officers and collision investigators.

- To improve the first point of contact with the public. Investing in more Contact Centre and social media engagement staff to improve its service for both 101 and 999 calls, as well as online engagement; and
- specialist police investigators for public protection, serious violence, high harm and digital crime.

As over 5 months has now elapsed, it would be very good to know what progress has been made with recruiting these additional (and vital) staff. I am happy to write to the PCC to ask how many officers have already been recruited and/or deployed and the anticipated timetable for completing the process.

I will also ask – as I would also like to know - if this additional resourcing will mean that there will be a commitment to routinely having a police presence at community Local Action Team meetings, once again.

**(9) Councillor Mac Cafferty - Preston Twin elms**

Given the significant loss to the city's elm collection with the necessary destruction of one of the 'Preston Twin' elms, when will the Administration be reinstating online reporting forms for the public to report elms suffering Dutch Elm disease? When a resident in my ward reported a suspected elm with the disease just weeks ago on Brunswick Road, the facility to report wasn't possible at the time. This still isn't available. Brunswick Road has now lost four elms in quick succession. What evidence is there that the Dutch Elm disease has struck harder this year than last and for the past five years?

**Reply from Councillor Pissaridou, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

We have over 300 online forms across the council. IT&D and the digital communications team are currently auditing all of these forms. We are aiming to rationalise and combine similar forms so they are easier for us to manage, and re-design all forms so they are user friendly and more accessible to people with disabilities.

In the meantime, we've included an email address to allow residents to report elm trees suffering Dutch Elm disease on the webpage.

We have already recorded more infection sites this year than the average for the previous 4 years and we anticipate that by the end of the season infection sites will be significantly higher than any of these years.

- 2015 – 95 sites
- 2016 – 89 sites
- 2017 – 84 sites
- 2018 – 120 sites
- 2019 – 108 sites (so far)

**(10) Councillor Mac Cafferty - Construction projects**

Further to the shock news that the construction firm performing the works at the restored Corn Exchange has folded, how is the council ensuring that any replacement firm isn't given carte blanche to finish the works at significantly increased cost to the council and public purse. What internal auditing is the council conducting in its other construction projects to ensure we minimise similar problems.

**Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Tourism, Development & Culture Committee**

The council has reacted quickly to this situation in order to put steps in place to ensure that the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange is delivered successfully.

The site has been secured and the Design Team are currently undertaking a review of works that have been completed to date and are thoroughly documenting the project. This will inform any specification of works that will be required to complete the project and will be carefully costed by the Quantity Surveyor in order to ensure any future costs are controlled. Specialist support with experience of dealing with this type of situation has also been appointed to advise the council.

The council is keen to avoid this type of situation. It is routine procedure to undertake financial checks on the financial standing of potential contractors as part of the procurement process. In addition, where a company is contracted to deliver large and/or high-risk projects, the financial status of that company is regularly monitored. Checks are carried out by appropriately trained officers and by use of external credit check agencies.

**(11) Councillor Theobald**

When is the dreadful state of the carpark opposite Hove Town hall going to be tidied up?

The piece of land in front of the car park is overgrown and full of weeds. Also grass and weeds are growing along the walls and paths.

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

Officers in Parking Services have arranged for a contractor to remove the weeds and will be ensuring these areas are included as part of our specification for the cleaning contract that we shall be going out to tender for later in the year.

**(12) Councillor Theobald**

When will the children's playgrounds in the City that are in need of refurbishing and upgrading going to be improved? Equipment in Hove Park and Patcham has been out of order for some time. Is there not a rolling programme for children's playgrounds?

Section 106 money is infrequent, and action needs to be taken now.

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

There is not a rolling programme for children’s’ playgrounds and has not been for a long time due to the budget available for this work.

The council has been dependant on external funding or funding transferred from underspends elsewhere to replace playground equipment. The equipment replaced with funding from the government’s Playbuilder scheme is now coming to the end of its life.

Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee has recently approved additional one-off funding for playgrounds which, coupled with external funding, will go a long way to alleviate the immediate problems but as we will continue to be dependent on budget top ups from other sources the issue is likely to reoccur.

**(13) Councillor Druitt - Pesticides:**

The council’s recent commitment to phase out the use of pesticides within three years is to be welcomed wholeheartedly. However, in the council’s press release of 27 June Cllr Pissaridou is quoted saying “we should achieve in excess of 95 per cent reduction in the use of glyphosate by the council this year as compared to last year”.

If this is the case, why can’t we go all the way and reduce it by 100%? What is the 5% that will still be treated with glyphosate and why can’t it be managed any other way?

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

It is a big step for the council to stop using Glyphosate although there are plenty of examples of small-scale pesticide free areas it is not an approach that is common for Highway Authorities. We will be using a variety of techniques to keep weeds down, but we may still have problem weeds in some areas. There are no specific plans to use Glyphosate on any areas however we are keen to ensure that we do not misinform the public so with an element of doubt the option to use a small amount of Glyphosate has been kept open. We are happy to provide details on when and where any Glyphosate is used should this prove necessary.

**(14) Councillor Druitt - 5G**

Due to the public interest in 5G and a number of concerns raised by residents that that there may be health risks associated with the technology can the council satisfy councillors that the science of 5G is well understood and the technology does not pose any health risks to residents?

## **Reply from Councillor Moonan – Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board**

In our role as the body who promotes Economic Development in the city, the Council is always striving for ways to improve digital connectivity. This is particularly important given the fact our economy has such a strong specialism in the Creative, Digital and IT sectors. This means looking to promote the most up to date and effective mobile and wireless technologies as well as for trying to achieve as much fibre connectivity into homes and work premises as we can achieve.

Public Health England takes the lead and provides the expert advice on public health matters associated with radiofrequency electromagnetic fields, or radio waves, used in telecommunications.

Therefore, in response to this question, the Council's Public Health team has liaised with Public Health England to obtain the latest information and guidance and to seek their advice on whether there are any health risks for the public.

Public Health England advise that there are now many 2G, 3G and 4G base stations installed throughout the environment providing services to users of mobile phones and other devices. Measurements show that exposures of the general public to radio waves are well within the international health-related guideline levels that are used in the UK. These guidelines are from the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) and underpin health protection policies at UK and European levels.

In relation to the implementation of 5G user devices and networks, this technology is at an early stage. The highest frequencies being discussed for future use by 5G are around ten times higher than those used by current network technologies, up to a few tens of GHz. Current technical standards that draw on the ICNIRP guidelines will apply to the products that are developed and the UK network operators are already committed to complying with the ICNIRP guidelines.

Exposure to radio waves is not new and health-related research has been conducted on this topic over several decades. In particular, a large amount of new scientific evidence has emerged over the past few years through dedicated national and international research programmes that have addressed concerns about rapidly proliferating wireless technologies.

The main focus of recent research studies has been on exposure to the types of radio signals used by current communications technologies and at the frequencies they use, up to a few GHz. Fewer studies have been carried out at higher frequencies but the biophysical mechanisms that govern the interaction between radio waves and body tissues are well understood at higher frequencies and are the basis of the present ICNIRP restrictions. The main change in using higher frequencies is that there is less penetration of radio waves into body tissues and absorption of the radio energy, and any consequent heating, becomes more confined to the body surface.

Public Health England advise that it is possible that there may be a small increase in overall exposure to radio waves when 5G is added to an existing network or in a new area; however, the overall exposure is expected to remain low relative to guidelines and as such there should be no consequences for public health.

Public Health England state that they are committed to monitoring the evidence applicable to this and other radio technologies, and to revising its advice, should that be necessary.

Within Brighton and Hove mobile operators are starting the process of rolling out new 5G infrastructure. Whilst local planning authorities do have some limited ability to influence the roll out of mobile technology those powers are limited by central government regulations. But the planning system does require that any new installations accord with the ICNIRP guidelines.

A fuller technical briefing note is available and will be sent round to all Councillors.

**(15) Councillor Druitt - Trees**

As we all know, urban trees have a huge number of benefits; they are crucial habitats for wildlife, they improve air quality and mental health and are critical assets in the fight against climate change. I'm delighted that the council is bidding for funding from the government's Urban Tree Challenge Fund to plant more trees in Brighton & Hove and wonder if the council can give more information on where these will go, how allocations will be made and whether this initiative can be accompanied by a comprehensive Tree strategy for the city?

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

The Administration does agree on the importance of urban trees and is committed to reversing the decline in our street trees.

The Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee recently agreed one-off additional funding of £200,000 into street tree planting. It is hoped that this, along with money being spent on trees as part of the Valley garden scheme, can be used to draw in external funding to plant even more urban trees.

We have also successfully negotiated significant sums for street tree planting from developers in the City.

**(16) Councillor Osborne**

Is there a charge levied to your phone network for calling the parking enforcement team? If so, how much is this charge?

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

There isn't a charge levied on the parking enforcement telephone number. All numbers that start with 03 are charged at the same rate as standard landline numbers. If your phone tariff offers inclusive calls to landlines, calls to 0300 numbers will also be included.

**(17) Councillor Osborne**

When parking permits are started in an area is there a plan to protect those on low incomes/benefits that still require the use of their car? Has there been a consideration for a more gradual implementation to ease the transition or additional schemes to encourage the uptake of more sustainable forms of transport when the permits are brought in?

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

There are currently no plans to offer concessions to those on low incomes / benefits, however, parking permits can be bought in three month quarterly instalments rather than a yearly fee. The resident parking permits offer good value for those owning a vehicle to prioritise parking in areas where resident have voted in favour of a resident parking scheme. The parking surplus from parking schemes is used towards transport improvements such as improving other forms of sustainable transport which can be viewed in our award winning annual parking report.

**(18) Councillor Shanks**

What is the council doing to progress development on derelict sites in the city? In my ward alone, we have Buckingham Road and Portland road both are brownfield sites ideal for housing. Will the council look at using CPOs to acquire these sites and others like it throughout the city and develop them for social housing?

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

Improving housing supply, in particular the supply of low cost rented homes is a priority for the council. We continue to look at the range of initiatives available to deliver additional affordable housing in the city.

We make use of brownfield sites within our ownership to progress our New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme, which has delivered 184 homes to date. This includes the delivery this month of 12 new homes at Kensington Street on the site of a former car park in the heart of the North Laines.

A number of additional schemes are in progress including at Oxford Street, Buckley Close, Selsfield Drive and Victoria Road making use of valuable brownfield sites in the city.

The city council has a statutory requirement to prepare, produce and maintain a Brownfield Land Register which is updated annually. This register provides details of sites, its current planning status and whether the site is in public ownership or not.

A number of sites already have planning consent including the two sites mentioned 34 homes are due to be delivered at 76-79 & 80 Buckingham Road (Planning decision August 2018) with a further 12 homes at 123-129 Portland Road (Planning decision April 2017). Development of brownfields sites can be difficult with problems to overcome with many sites ranging from contamination to complex mixed ownership.

The council has a track record of using Compulsory Purchase Orders to bring empty property dwellings back into use, and there could be options to acquire sites subject to the council meeting the test for when an order should be used.

### **(19) Councillor Deane**

Will this Council sign-up to the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration, which was launched on the 12<sup>th</sup> July?

#### **Reply from Councillor Platts – Leader of the Council**

I am pleased to support this initiative which would complement the council's commitment to maximising social value and sharing wealth in the city.

As stated in the declaration, paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn't be. Not when considered against the huge array of public services it helps fund – from education, health and social care, to flood defence, roads, policing and defence. It also helps to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.

There is evidence that a significant proportion of public sector tenders are won by companies who seek to manage tax liabilities, for example by offshoring.

Action is needed, however, current law significantly restricts councils' ability to either penalise poor tax conduct or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.

By signing up to the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration, the council would:

- lead by example on its own tax conduct.
- demand greater transparency from suppliers.
- call for more meaningful powers to tackle tax avoidance amongst suppliers when buying goods and services.
- Support calls for urgent reform of EU and UK law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.

The Procurement Advisory Board will be asked to consider the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration, and then a recommendation will be taken to Policy, Resources & Growth Committee.