

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 Theobald

For the last few years the Council has published the fact that over the Christmas period Thursday's refuse collection (this year the 25 December) would take place on the following Saturday (this year the 27 December). This has always failed for some or most of the roads. Please list the roads where the Council failed to collect the Thursday refuse on Saturday 27 December and the number of days from Thursday 18 December the last collection to when the refuse was eventually collected. Will the Council consider a different approach for those whose refuse collection day is on a Thursday for next Christmas?

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

As a point of clarity in regards the question, Christmas this year fell on a Wednesday, with the revised collection taking place on Friday 27 December. The collections due on Thursday 26 December were scheduled for Saturday 28 December.

88 missed refuse collections were reported on Friday 27 December.
44 missed refuse collections were reported on Saturday 28 December.

For Saturday 28 December, there were only two roads with three or more missed collections (both with three). The other reports were individual missed collections. This backs up the feedback from Team Leaders that most roads were collected.

We are reflecting on this year's approach to the festive period and will make changes as necessary and procuring IT systems to improve the quality of data that we hold.

(2) Councillor McNair

Brighton & Hove City Council has oversight of the education delivered by schools in the city, in particular of pupils in its care. It also has a responsibility to ensure all children, no matter their religion, gender, race, family income or nationality have as good an education as possible. 13.4% of state-funded secondary school pupils in Brighton & Hove are eligible and claiming for Free School Meals. This is above the average of 9.5% for the Southeast (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2019>). According to UCAS, the average salary for graduates is 30% higher than for non-graduates aged 25-30. <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/why-choose-higher-education>. Helping the poorest and most disadvantaged pupils in Brighton & Hove attend university is therefore likely to help raise both pupils' and the city's

standard of living. While Brighton & Hove has a higher than an average number of pupils claiming Free School Meals, it also happens to be fortunate in having two excellent universities, and potentially an excellent route for its poorest students to escape poverty.

In order to feel reassured that Brighton & Hove City Council is making the most of its relationship with its two universities, and is providing the very best service to its poorest and most disadvantaged children, could the Leader of the Council:

- 1) Provide a breakdown of data of pupils by background (ethnicity, religion, income, gender, free school meal) attending university (Russell Group and other) from Brighton & Hove state schools?
- 2) Detail how local schools and the Universities of Brighton and Sussex, in partnership with the Council, are helping Brighton & Hove's poorest and most disadvantaged students (with reference to ethnicity, religion, income, gender and free school meals) reach university?
- 3) Outline methods, and lessons learned from other Local Authorities, to increase progression of Brighton & Hove's most disadvantaged pupils to university which are due to be implemented by Brighton & Hove?

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

- 1) The tracking of post 16 destination data is undertaken by the Youth Employability Service, Families Children and Learning Directorate; however, the requirement to report on the Year 13 leavers (aged 18) was removed by the Department for Education in 2016. And at this time the Council stopped collecting this data. Unfortunately, this means that we cannot provide the data requested. The Department of Education annually publishes official statistics on education attainment which includes achievement of Level 3 by the age of 19. In 2018 (2015 cohort of school leavers) 58% of young people achieved a Level 3 qualification, this is in line with national outcomes. Achievement at Level 3 increases the likelihood of progressing into Higher Education or apprenticeships.
- 2) The Sussex Learning Network which includes the two universities and the council <https://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/about-us/> led a consortium bid and was successfully awarded funding to support projects and targeted outreach activity across Brighton and Hove and Sussex. <https://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/project-category/current-projects/>.

The National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) delivers collaborative innovative and impactful activities and projects in local schools and FE colleges. For example, the program includes black, Asian and minority ethnic mentoring programmes and dedicated information, advice and guidance programmes for the disadvantaged.

Universities and the NCOP programme use dedicated national data sources which identify the likelihood of a young person participating in higher education. In school interventions are targeted to young people who live in postcode areas with a low likelihood of participation. The universities and

the NCOP programme will hold equalities data for the disadvantaged young people engaged on their programmes. This is not held by the Council.

Both universities demonstrate their commitment to working with disadvantaged students through their widening participation programmes. They offer a suite of engagement opportunities.

<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/studying-here/applying-to-brighton/schools-teachers/outreach/widening-participation/index.aspx>

<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/about/access-to-education>

For example, the University of Sussex compact scheme means that many secondary schools send children to visit and stay at the campus.

The Greater Brighton Metropolitan College also plays an important outreach role to widen participation locally

<https://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/projects/gb-met-2020-outreach-offer/>

Children in Care are a group that are prioritised for support. For example:

- From secondary school age they can have access to a Higher Education Student Mentor, who provides impartial information, advice, guidance and support about applying to and the experience of being at university. Currently there are six trained mentors who are care leavers who have attended university.
- The LA fund travel costs to University open days and taster days.
- The Leaving Care team facilitate links to University Care Leaver leads in the University Widening Participation Teams.
- The Personal Education Plan process is used to ensure aspirations to attend university are discussed.
- The Fostering team support foster carers who may not be familiar with the university system.

The Local offer for Brighton and Hove students attending higher education includes:

- Financial support of £670 at the start of each term.
- Free Wi-Fi
- 52 weeks a year rent paid
- Required books, equipment special clothing, field trips etc.
- Travel costs to and from University each term.
- Links are made with the care leaver lead at university.

There are currently 31 care leavers at university.

- 3) Maximising the attainment and progress of all pupils particularly disadvantaged is a high priority across the City. If young people from a disadvantaged background attain more highly and achieve level 3 qualifications, then the chance of attending University increases.

All universities are required (by the Office for Students) to publish access and participation plans which set how they will improve equality of

opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education. As an example please see the access plan for the University of Sussex <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/terms-and-conditions/access-agreements>.

Both of the Universities in this city contribute to improving the progression of disadvantaged pupils. The investment in NCOP and the governance, monitoring and reporting requirements implemented by the Office for Students will ensure that national good practice will be captured and disseminated.

Locally, through the Sussex Learning Network, Brighton and Hove, its neighbouring authorities, and FE and HE partners will continue to work together to ensure that the outreach hub funded through NCOP is established and that opportunities for progression remain at the core of the partnership.

There is always room for learning from others' experiences. Your suggestion that we approach other Local Authorities is welcome and something worth pursuing. This Administration is committed to continue to improve and develop programmes to end the attainment gap for disadvantaged children.

(3) Councillor Deane

Between 1st April and 31st December 2019, how many collections of illegal fly-tipping have been made by the CityClean team, and what is the estimated cost to the city clean service of collections of illegal fly-tipping?

For the same time period, how much income has been generated through the council's 'bulky waste collection service,' for residents – (i.e. not commercial collection?) and through fines issued?

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

Between 1 April and 31 December 2019, there were 1593 instances of fly-tipping reported to Cityclean. This reporting does not capture all fly-tip instances as if a Street Cleansing Crew discovers a fly-tip while on duty, they will clear it, sometimes before it is reported.

Between April and December, 547 tonnes (figure unaudited) of fly-tipped waste was collected, with an estimated disposal cost of £94,000. (The figure for 2018/19 was 1,392 tonnes, costing £232,000).

This relates to the cost of disposal only, as officer time, vehicles and other associated costs are not separately recorded for the collection of fly-tipped waste from the Street Cleansing budget and therefore we are unable to calculate an accurate cost.

Between 1 April and 31 December:

- 123 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued for residential fly-tipping. This generated £18,900.
- 282 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued for commercial fly-tipping. This generated £75,155

The bulky waste service is contracted out through a concession contract. This means the council does not receive any income through the bulky waste collection service.

(4) Councillor West

At the October ETS Committee, Members agreed a Green Amendment to “Commission a report on the feasibility of the Council establishing a carbon reduction scheme, to enable local residents and businesses to invest in woodland planting, energy schemes and other local carbon reduction and carbon capturing projects.”

The Council has declared a climate emergency, and in response Labour and Greens are agreed on the need for the city to be carbon neutral by 2030. This will be a challenging task and the availability of Government funding to make the extensive changes needed is not apparent and may not be forthcoming. However, the high level of public concern about the climate emergency suggests there is good opportunity for the Council to “crowdfund” investment for local carbon reduction from local people and businesses. This could be offered as a way to off-set current carbon foot-prints while households and businesses make their own carbon reductions. The funds raised could be offered to local carbon reduction projects as grants or recycled as loans from a local green bank. These local projects would not only off-set investors carbon but also support everyone in the city to be better able to effect their own carbon reductions.

I believe the LEP are considering a scheme to harness investment to help fulfil the Sussex Natural Capital Investment Strategy developed by the Sussex Nature Partnership. This could be just one channel for carbon reduction investment raised by Brighton & Hove.

Founding and promoting a carbon reduction fund for the City will require start-up and operational funding. £50,000 would perhaps be of the right order to get this going. What budget provision is the Administration making for this initiative within the 2020/21 budget?

Reply from Councillor Yates, Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee

The council is exploring a wide range of options, including external funding opportunities, to support the Corporate Plan commitment to address the climate emergency and work towards a carbon neutral city. This will not only require the council to consider appropriate and affordable investments but means we must also focus on working with partners and other agencies to use our position as community leader to lead by example, influence and encourage others to adopt climate change strategies and policies.

As Members will be aware, the government have only provided a one-year Spending Review at this time and we are putting the finishing touches to the 2020/21 budget proposals for this council and will bring these to the February Budget Council. Local Government resources remain under severe pressure and yet we must still find funding for essential, statutory services, particularly social care, to support those in need. We are hopeful, however, that some resources can be found to support climate initiatives and support the process of addressing climate change in 2020/21. Once the government have announced the funding position for the longer term, expected later in 2020, we will be able to plan our approach to this emergency with greater certainty.

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(5) Councillor Gibson

For the period from 1st of April 2019 to 1st of January 2020 what was:

- a) The number of bus lane PCNs issued and what has been the associated fine income?
- b) The CPZ permit income?
- c) The civil parking enforcement cost?

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

- a) To the 1st January 2020, we have issued 48,918 Bus Lane PCNs. Total income to the council in this same time period is £1,979,709. Some of this income will be attributable to Bus Lane Enforcement issued in the previous financial year as income is based on when it is received rather than when the ticket is issued.

- b) CPZ income (which is interpreted as all resident permit related income) is £3,320,000 up to 1st January 2020.
- c) The amount paid to our enforcement contractor, NSL, is £2,977,575 up to 1st January 2020.

(6) Councillor Gibson

For the period from 1st of April 2019 to 1st of January 2020 what was the number of properties sold under the right to buy scheme?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of the Housing Committee.

As at 1st January 2020 there have been 28 homes sold under the Right to Buy scheme this financial year.

(7) Councillor Gibson

For the answer provided to my question to council on Thursday 24th October to concerning the borrowing costs please can you provide the annual repayment costs for repayment periods of 5, 7, 10, 15, 20 and 25 years (on loans of 5, 10, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 50 million pounds)?

Reply from Councillor Yates, Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee.

The following annual repayment costs are based on the published Public Works Loan Board Certainty rates on the afternoon of 23/01/2020:

Based on Annuity	Period					
	5 years	7 years	10 years	15 years	20 years	25 years
PWLB Certainty Rate	2.23%	2.29%	2.45%	2.75%	2.93%	2.99%
Loan amount	£'000 pa					
£5m	1,068	781	570	411	334	287
£10m	2,136	1,562	1,140	823	668	574
£20m	4,272	3,125	2,279	1,645	1,336	1,147
£25m	5,339	3,906	2,849	2,056	1,670	1,434
£30m	6,407	4,687	3,419	2,468	2,003	1,721
£35m	7,475	5,468	3,989	2,879	2,337	2,008
£40m	8,543	6,250	4,559	3,290	2,671	2,295
£50m	10,679	7,812	5,698	4,113	3,339	2,868

(8) Councillor Gibson

How much rent (expressed as a percentage) due to seaside homes for 2019/20 had the council collected as of 31st December 2019? Given that the council is required to pay a minimum of 91% of rent due to seaside if this collection rate continues how much will BHCC be required to pay under the rent guarantee agreement for 2019/20?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of the Housing Committee

The council has collected 85.7% of rent due in 2019/20 up to 31/12/19. The council is due to pay 91% of rent due in 2019/20 to Seaside homes and currently this is estimated to total £4.444m. Therefore, based on this collection rate continuing for the rest of the year, this would lead to a forecast shortfall of £0.257m in rent to be met by the council. However, this forecast could reduce depending on the success of the current financial recovery plan.

(9) Councillor Hugh-Jones

I refer to my question to Full Council in December 2019. The response I received referred to the Private Sector Housing Strategy adopted by Housing Committee in November 2019. Having looked again at the Strategy, I can find no specific reference to enforcement of EPC ratings so:

- 1) Can you please confirm that the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Strategy will cover this;
- 2) Indicate what resources the Council is allocating to implementation of this Strategy from April and specifically what resources will be allocated to enforcement of EPC ratings in the private rental sector;
- 3) Indicate (i) how many private rented sector properties in the city are currently F and G rated and (ii) provide an estimate of how many of these properties will be subject to an exemption because the cost cap of £3500 is insufficient to improve the property's rating to EPC E and landlords are unable to able to secure third-party funding to cover all or part of the cost of improving their properties to EPC E.

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of the Housing Committee

- 1) While our Private Sector Housing Enforcement policy does not specifically cover the EPC ratings, all statutory duties in relation to the private sector will be addressed.
- 2) 'Potential Investments' included in the Draft Revenue Budget & Capital Strategy 2020/2 (reported to Policy & Resources Committee on 5 December 2019) includes potential additional investment of £100k to cover full-year costs of supporting and continuing the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy agreed by Housing Committee on 18 Sept 2019.
 - i) The analysis carried out in 2018 showed the following estimates in the PRS;

- 1312 F rated properties
 - 421 G rated properties
- ii) We do not have data to provide an estimate of how many of these would be exempt under the £3500 cap on without further analysis. It is also worth noting that this is not the only eligible exemption under the regulations so would not necessarily give us an accurate indication of the total number of these properties that would be exempt. To estimate the above would require a fuller analysis of a number of datasets so that any enforcement can be targeted effectively. In addition, some of these properties may be homes we are already aware of and involved with, including existing HMO's or properties where we have open Requests for Assistance with Private Sector Housing officers.

(10) Councillor Fishleigh

In the upcoming 2020/21 budget, how much additional money will be set-aside for the restoration of Madeira Terraces?

Reply from Councillor Yates, Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee

The council has to date, set aside £2 million capital resources to support the Madeira Terraces project, which is in addition to the £440,000 raised through crowdfunding.

The planned expenditure of these resources is set out in the table below and excludes any further fundraising or grants that may be required to complete the first 30 arches or subsequent phases.

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	TOTAL £
Council Funding – Design Team for first 30 Arches	50,000	500,000		550,000
Council Funding – build/ implementation / fit-out			1,450,000	1,450,000
Crowdfunding toward build / implementation/ fit out of 3 arches			440,000	440,000
TOTAL	50,000	500,000	1,890,000	2,440,000

(11) Councillor Druitt

It's now two and a half years since the Council unanimously passed the Green Notice of Motion on a Cycling Strategy (attached). Can we please have an update on:

- what has been done since
- what, if anything, was attempted but not achieved
- what is still outstanding pending officer time or financial resources, and what is the plan for this
- what, if anything, it has been decided not to pursue

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

On each occasion that this matter has been discussed at council meetings, the Administration has clearly explained its approach and priorities for cycling. This is all recorded in the minutes of those meetings which are published on our website.

The current priority is the development of a Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan; and we are making good progress on it. The plan will significantly help us to identify needs and barriers, and establish the cycling and walking priorities that will contribute towards delivering a safe, accessible, sustainable and high quality transport network that everybody can use.

Last year, our Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee considered reports about the plan and established a Member Task & Finish Group to enable councillors to oversee its development. The Group met for the first time in December, and I am sure that you will have been briefed on all of this by Councillor West, who represents your group on it. Future meetings will involve and engage stakeholders, and there will also be wider consultation as the plan is developed. The current programme indicates that the plan will be completed by the end of this year.

However, that isn't all that we are doing on cycling and walking. There are many projects and programmes taking place that include new and improved cycling provision, and which promote and enable more cycling as part of our overall transport strategy. These include prioritised maintenance of road and pavement surfaces; all three phases of the Valley Gardens project; and the continuing success of the city's BikeShare scheme.

I therefore look forward to continuing to work with all councillors to ensure that these priorities will enable two of the key commitments in our Corporate Plan to be delivered. These are to 'Develop an active and sustainable travel network' and to 'Increase healthy life expectancy and reduce health inequalities'. All of this work will ensure that walking and cycling can become people's first choice for as many of their journeys as possible.

(12) Councillor Mac Cafferty

Across the entire council workforce, how many staff in which departments are currently engaged in a redundancy consultation process?

Reply from Councillor Yates, Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee

The council takes all appropriate steps available to it to minimise the risk of redundancy as far as possible. Where staff are potentially put at risk of redundancy through the proposed deletion of a post, or posts, in a service, the council will invite applications for voluntary severance from relevant staff wherever practicable. This process operates alongside the council's redeployment pool into which people at risk of redundancy are placed in an attempt to find and match them to suitable alternative employment within the council.

The council is not currently dealing directly with any member of staff who has been made redundant but there are a number of people who are potentially at risk of redundancy subject to the outcome of the aforementioned processes.

The numbers of staff at risk of redundancy are as follows:

- (a) Families, Children & Learning: 4 people at risk of redundancy.
- (b) Strategy, Governance & Law: 2 people at risk of redundancy.

The following directorates do not currently have any staff at risk of redundancy:

Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities
Finance & Resources including Orbis Services
Health & Adult Social Care
Economy, Environment & Culture

(13) Councillor Mac Cafferty

The city council's target budget management has identified repeat overspend in agency costs at Cityclean. In this financial year what is this sum for the overspend itself and what is the sum allocated for dealing with such overspend; what is the nature of the overspend (times/ occasions etc); and what work is being done through the council's audit processes to monitor this expenditure to prevent this re-occurring?

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

The TBM09 forecast for Cityclean agency spend is £0.950m. This is the result of higher than budgeted staff costs due to the additional collection drivers and operatives to cover the service, as well as increased costs following the fire at Hollingdean Waste Transfer Station.

Cityclean are acting to reduce the overspend. We are recruiting additional posts within CityClean so that there is less reliance on agency staff. Cityclean use

agency staff to cover sickness and annual leave; staff work outside in all weathers undertaking manual handling and this can have an impact on absence levels. A well-being group has been set up to look at the key causes of sickness absence to look at wellbeing initiatives to support attendance at work. As part of the Modernisation Programme the service is identifying opportunities to reduce the reliance on agency workers.

(14) Councillor Mac Cafferty

Further to its successful adoption at budget council in February 2019, can the Administration inform me what has happened to the £0.333m resource allocated to a newly formed Community Clean-up Fund (in Green Group amendment 2- general fund) to be used for anti-graffiti materials for community groups. And as additional resource was allocated to this, can there be an explanation as to why wipes etc are no longer provided for community tidy ups?

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

Cityclean launched Community Clean Up inbox in September which we have promoted to inform people that they can contact us for materials for community clean ups. We were previously providing materials on requests made to individual officers. The Community Clean up inbox will make access to the community clean-up fund easier and more accessible to a wider range of people.

We have only started logging the specific costs of materials issued for community clean ups since we set up the new inbox at the end of September. We therefore can only provide an estimated expenditure on materials used for this purpose which is £16k. This has provided paint, cleaning products; equipment; community storage units for materials which includes 6 community 'Superbins' and a strongbox. The demand for community strongboxes (for storing materials) is high and they are also more efficient as we can keep them stocked with materials rather than making special journeys. This also gives the groups greater independence and flexibility, so we are looking to invest another £5k for 5 more boxes in the near future to meet demands. This does depend on us finding a suitable location and key holders.

We have taken the opportunity of the additional funds for material to expand the 'tidy up team' approach from working in parks to working across the city wherever volunteers want to hold a tidy up event. We have now have more than 100 Tidy Up Team volunteers and a large number of community groups and individual who regularly clean up their area and paint out graffiti. So far this year there have been 163 beach cleans supported by the council and the community clean-up fund. We are grateful to all of the volunteers and community groups who make such a valuable contribution to their communities.

We are researching new street cleansing equipment to steam clean pavements. We have trialled hot foam technology, but we have further research to do.

Any remaining funding from the additional £33k will be used as a contribution towards the cost of hiring temporary staff in the summer to manually remove weeds.

The graffiti wipes contain chemicals that cause irritation to the eyes and it is advised that the product should not enter drains due to its hazardous nature. The Operatives that use them are COSHH trained and wear PPE at all times. Without suitable training, it has been determined that the wipes are not suitable for the general public to use. We are looking into options to find an alternative that is suitable for the public to use.

(15) Councillor Mac Cafferty

Further to its successful adoption at budget council in February 2019, can the Administration inform me what has happened to the £0.022m resource allocated to support student volunteers and belongings at the end of the student term (in Green Group amendment 3- general fund). Further can I be informed when such assistance will start to become available?

Reply from Councillor Yates, Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee

A council communications officer and a projects officer have been working with the universities of Sussex and Brighton to target students on fly-tipping and general waste.

A plan is being drawn up that will target the city's student population (of around 40,000) on recycling, cutting contamination and warning of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for littering and most importantly fly-tipping.

Student landlords will also be targeted on fly-tipping at the beginning and end of terms.

Joint communications will be carried out through liaison with the Universities' community ambassadors and targeted communications through direct mailing, leaflets, face to face visits, and through a stall at student fresher's weeks and fairs.

The budget will be used to design and produce a suite of communications to help deliver the above including leaflets, pop-up banners, traditional and social media education campaigns, paid for advertising in university and other student popular media.

The Universities have advised the best time to target their students is in the New Year as new students are more settled in by this time.

(16) Councillor Mac Cafferty

An astonishing 1 in 6 people in the city wait a whole week to see their GP with too many waiting longer; 10 GP surgeries in Brighton and Hove have now closed in the last couple of years. What representation has the Administration made about this intolerable situation to the Clinical Commissioning Group and when are these waiting figures going to decrease? A year ago, I asked this same question. Can progress in that period be documented please?

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

The CCG is not aware of any validated measure of GP waiting times. Nevertheless, our regular engagement with patients and with practices suggests that a number do have trouble accessing their GP when they want. To improve this situation, the CCG takes a threefold approach, commissioning extra appointments for patients; improving the signposting for patients so they can see the right clinician for them; and supporting General Practices to remain as resilient as possible given the current national workforce pressures.

Improved GP Access

We understand that people cannot always go to see their GP during standard working hours, so the NHS has expanded local services to help more people get access to the right medical professional, providing the right care, in the right place at the right time through the Improved Access programme.

Residents can now benefit from easier access to evening and weekend appointments, being made available at GPs across the city. This service sees local GP practices working together to offer patients appointments at more convenient times when they call their local practice. Patients can make an appointment between 6.30pm to 8.30pm at night in the week and from 10am to 4pm on a Saturday and Sunday. These appointments are in addition to the usual GP surgery opening hours from 8am to 6pm. It means that when patients contact their doctor they will be offered appointments at an accessible time and day at surgeries in the city where appointments are available, which may not always be patients' usual practice. Appointments may not be at patient's usual practice, but if they talk to a receptionist, they can help patients find the right service and at a time that works best for them.

The CCG is currently commissioning software for practices to offer online consultations, should patients request them. This is in addition to, rather than replacing existing appointments and will become available during the next 12 months depending on the practice decision to access the service.

Better signposting

People can also dial 111 if they need medical help but are not in a life-threatening situation. NHS 111 is a non-emergency service patients can use if they are unsure of which healthcare service they need to visit. It offers access to advice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by phone and online and can connect callers to healthcare professionals, including nurses, emergency dentists or

GPs. 111 can also link to the NUMSAS service, offering emergency prescriptions to be picked up from a pharmacist without having to contact a surgery. From 1 April 111 will also offer a Clinical Assessment Service (CAS), offering patients the opportunity to speak to a clinician rather than a call handler. Research suggests that a significant number of patients will need no further action once they have spoken with the CAS.

More resilient general practice

Every effort is made by our CCG to support local General Practice services in the city, which we know are facing the same pressures that are being reported from around England. A key area of our plans to improve health care is to make sure general practice is more sustainable for the years ahead, and there are a number of ways in which we support our practices, including:

- Engagement with the overseas recruitment programme
- Supporting a wide staff mix within practices, which can include employing nurse practitioners, paramedics or pharmacists
- Providing access to the primary care development fund
- Support funding bids to NHS England
- Providing support for GPs trained in the city to stay once qualified
- Enabling mentoring and peer support for new GPs

Additional information

- It is true to say that in the last ten years there has been a significant reduction in the number of practices in Brighton. However, the following should be noted.
- In the last few years this trend has stabilised, with only one proposed merger in the last 24 months which will not result in any reduction of numbers of practice staff in the city.
- The mergers and any closures of local GP surgeries are not the result of any CCG funding cuts or reorganisation, but the decision of the practice partners.
- Often, as with the recently proposed merger of Matlock Road, the numbers of staff remain the same, transferring to the newly merged organisation.
- Every effort is made by the CCG to support local General Practice services, which we know are facing the same pressures that are being reported from around England.
- As a statutory public body, the CCG works within the current policy and framework set out by NHS England and will continue to do so to ensure patients receive on going GP services.

GP funding specific:

- GPs are self-employed practitioners.
- Unlike hospital doctors, GPs are usually not employed by the NHS – their practice works like a small business, receiving a sum of money per patient which is then used to pay for the premises, staff and other costs. Profits from this pay GP partners.
- B&HCCG cannot legally be a provider of GP services.

(17) Councillor Powell

Could the Leader of the council please clarify if both council chambers, all meeting rooms in Hove Hall, Brighton town Hall, Barts House and others, are fully accessible to residents, and staff with a range of disabilities?

- How often, and to what cost have the lifts broken down?
- How often have the accessible toilets been out of order, and what timescale is given to getting them back functioning again? Who is responsible for ensuring toilet rolls and soap? I have, on more than one occasion, had to go and report the lack of facilities to the reception at the town Hall.
- Could you clarify if all hearing loops are functioning adequately, and if a given number of staff know how to actually work them? If not, can this be put in place please?

Reply from Councillor Platts, Leader of the Council

Council Chambers and meeting rooms have step-free access, so either are on the ground floor with level or ramped approach or have lift access if located above ground floor. Both are accessible to residents.

Both Brighton Town Hall (accessible to residents) and Barts House (accessible to staff) have evacuation lifts which can accommodate 13 standing users, or 1 wheelchair user accompanied by assistants. In either case evacuation of disabled people is a managed system using trained personnel, but this does limit the number of people who cannot use stairs accessing spaces above ground floor.

It is the responsibility of the organiser of any meeting or event to ensure that the space they choose to use suits the access/egress requirements of those expected to attend and that they are responsible for completing a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for any individual who may experience difficulties.

How often, and to what cost have the lifts broken down?

The 3 main civic buildings that the Property facilities and building services team are responsible for, have in the last 12 months suffered the following failures:
Brighton Town Hall – 1 breakdown and 1 entrapment at a total cost of £160 ;
Hove Town Hall- 11 breakdowns and 1 entrapment at a total cost of £1180.
Bartholomew House 17 breakdowns and 1 entrapment at a total cost of £6200.

How often have the accessible toilets been out of order, and what timescale is given to getting them back functioning again?

There are several accessible toilets at Hove Town Hall and only the one in the main reception has experienced issues with frequent blockages and “spoiling” incidents. This toilet is used throughout the day by the public and is unsupervised by the concierge team. We have a cleaning staff member and an in-house plumbing technician based in Hove Town Hall and the majority of

incidents are attended to and the toilet returned to operational use within the hour.

We have no record of any failures elsewhere but if they were to occur the Premises plumbing technician would attend within a 4-hour response time.

Who is responsible for ensuring toilet rolls and soap? I have, on more than one occasion, had to go and report the lack of facilities to the reception at the town Hall.

The Property premises facilities team are responsible, and the toilet consumables are checked and maintained on a daily basis, should the consumables run out, the staff in both town halls will replenish immediately.

Could you clarify if all hearing loops are functioning adequately, and if a given number of staff know how to actually work them? If not, can this be put in place please?

The Premises audio technicians (2 No) regularly test the fixed loop hearing enhancement systems on a quarterly basis. These systems are switched on permanently and there are visible instructions in each room for hearing aid users to switch their aids to the loop frequency.

If a meeting space does not have a permanent hearing enhancement system, the premises facilities team have several portable systems (infra-red and induction loops) which can be set up for use by premises and guidance on use provided. The cost of providing these and the guidance is recharged to the meeting organiser.

Feedback from users has highlighted that poor acoustics in Committee Room 1 and the Volks Room at Brighton Town Hall means induction loops do not work efficiently in these spaces. Property is currently in the process of arranging for both these rooms to be acoustically treated by a specialist contractor.

(18) Councillor Hills

While I'm aware that a large number of taxis in the city are now wheelchair accessible, wheelchair users have reported waiting up to 2 hours for taxis. What can be done to ensure all our residents can access taxis within a reasonable timeframe?

Reply from Councillor O'Quinn, Chair of the Licensing Committee

The Council undertakes significant unmet demand surveys (every 3 years) to ensure that there is no significant unmet demand for Hackney Carriages in the City. The Council has a policy of having a mixed fleet of saloons and WAV's with the widest range of vehicles available for proprietors to licence. As no vehicle is suitable for all wheelchairs there are times such as during school runs when there will be a delay for passengers that do not use a reference wheelchair. However, we would expect, as a matter of courtesy, the operator to be clear to any passenger of the waiting time or delay prior to offering the

booking. Drivers are not legally compelled to carry any passenger that is not in a reference wheelchair, but Operators in the City have booking systems that match regular passengers to a vehicle that is able to safely carry the users of other types of chair where possible. Approximately 50% of the Hackney Carriage fleet is wheelchair accessible and 22% of the private hire fleet is wheelchair accessible which is amongst the highest in the country. Complaints of this nature are rare, but where the taxi licensing team have received complaints, officers work with the operator and liaise with the complainant to improve procedures. For example, some local operators now offer driver incentives to take wheelchair bookings.

(19) Councillor Hills

It is mandatory for all Brighton and Hove taxi drivers to undertake disability training as part of the Blue Book requirements. Yet, I've been told by wheelchair users that taxi drivers do not always position wheelchairs correctly/strap wheelchair-using passengers safely into their vehicle before a journey begins.

What can be done to ensure all licensed taxi drivers ensure the safe positioning of wheelchairs on all journeys?

Reply from Councillor O'Quinn, Chair of the Licensing Committee

Drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles are required to demonstrate every 3 years that they are competent in the safe loading/unload of wheelchair passengers by passing a wheelchair exercise test. The proprietor must also ensure that their drivers are competent in their particular vehicle. The Hackney Carriage Office has not received any complaints in recent years that wheelchair passengers are not being strapped down correctly, but if complaints were received then officers would investigate to ensure the driver had undertaken the necessary training and was competent. The passenger/carer also has a responsibility to ensure that the chair/themselves are securely strapped in and to alert the driver if there is a problem before the vehicle moves. The chair should be marked with the clamping points and/or the driver provided with instructions to the driver where it is safe to clamp any particular chair.

(20) Councillor Osborne – Council Homes

There are around 11,500 residential properties in the city owned by the council – how many bedrooms are there in total in these properties? How many bedrooms in these council homes aren't occupied? Has the council done any work, outside of the mutual exchange offer which tenants can apply for, on engaging with tenants to find out if they might wish to downsize or swap homes to one with less bedrooms?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of the Housing Committee

As at 24th January 2020 there are a total of 22,135 bedrooms within the residential properties let by the Council (Housing Revenue Account).

It is not possible to accurately provide data as to how many bedrooms aren't occupied as we are unable to extract data as to the relationships between the occupants or whether they share bedrooms , for example couples and / or siblings.

It is possible to extract data which provides the number of bedrooms and number of occupants for each council housing property.

As of 31 December 2019, there were 2,059 households with fewer occupants than bedrooms, about 18% of households.

However, overall, there are more occupants in our stock (25,097) than bedrooms (22,135).

One of our priorities is to make best use of our council housing stock, this includes supporting residents to 'downsize' when they choose and provide a range of options for them to support this.

The Council has a Tenant Incentive Scheme (TIS) which offers financial incentives to tenants to downsize when they are in accommodation that is larger than they need. This is advertised regularly in Homing In.

Our TIS officer has introduced herself to tenant's representatives and is happy to attend any meetings to raise awareness of the scheme.

Additionally, if the Housing Officer is aware that a household is under-occupying accommodation, they can discuss the option to downsize with them.

We also proactively contact tenants who are under occupying and at risk of accruing arrears to initiate discussion on options to move to smaller accommodation.

In addition, our Allocations Policy and any Local Lettings Plans for new build council homes both offer priority to residents who are downsizing from larger accommodation.

We are also reviewing our Seniors Housing offer to ensure it is attractive for people to downsize into.

(21) Councillor Osborne - Allotments

How many hectares of land is designated for allotments within the local authority? How many people in total are on the allotment waiting list and what is the expected waiting time for someone on this list to get an allotment?

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

60.7028 hectares (both cultivated and uncultivated) are designated for allotments.

Of that, 48.5614 hectares are cultivatable allotment land i.e. let and vacant plots

As of 21/01/20, there are 1,297 applicants on 35 separate site waiting lists.

Each site has its own waiting list with widely different waiting times. For the large sites on the western edge of the city with high-capacity and low demand the wait can be six to twelve months. On some of the tiny sites with less than ten plots in dense urban areas the wait is highly likely to be in excess of ten years. An average wait of two to three years on most larger sites is realistic.

(22) Councillor Osborne – Storage Facilities

Does the council own any of its own storage facilities? Where are they located and how well used are they? How much spare room is there in these facilities?

Reply from Councillor Yates, Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee

Within the council's operational portfolio there are storage facilities within the basements of Hove and Brighton Town Halls which are both fully utilised. Hove Town Hall issued by road safety, legal, premises cleaning consumables, printing paper, schools service cleaning equipment hire store, premises helpdesk technicians' consumables store. Brighton Town Hall is where ICT and rangers' teams have equipment stores, the bike store and another premises helpdesk technicians' consumables store. There are also small consumable storage rooms at Portslade Town Hall, Moulsecoomb and Whitehawk hubs. (All consumable stores are stock managed, used and replenished on a regular basis to ensure VFM and economy of scale in consumable replacement).

The Museums Service leases in a property for storage use. This lease will be assigned to the Royal Pavilion & Museum Trust when the museums service is outsourced.

Within New England House the council's school meals team and electoral services each occupy a unit for storage. Both services have confirmed that they do not have spare room in these units.

Within the commercial, agricultural and seafront portfolios there are properties including industrial units, lock up garages and seafront arches that are let or sublet for storage.

This response does not take account of storage facilities within the Housing stock.

(23) Councillor Osborne – Usage of Lawn Mowers and Leaf Blowers

Lawn mowers and leaf blowers have a detrimental effect on air quality- are these used by the council and, if so, how many are used and what is the overall cost of the equipment?

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

This equipment is used by the council.

We have 183 mowers, with a total value of £859,180.

We have 40 leaf blowers, with a total value of £10,268.

We have 84 strimmers / brushcutters with a total value of £25,245.

We cannot isolate the specific running costs of this equipment from the City Parks budget.

Please note, these are not all petrol-fueled machines. In line with our commitment to be carbon free by 2030, increasingly, as battery-powered technology improves, we are moving to battery operated machinery. A significant percentage of Cityparks' strimmers are now battery powered. Details of hedge cutting equipment was not requested, but this is another area where we are switching to battery-powered machines.

(24) Councillor Osborne – Pest Control

How many pest control inquiries has there been to the council over the past year? How many of these inquiries has the council followed up? How do both of these figures compare to previous years?

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

2017: 1399 domestic treatments undertaken of which 862 were for rats and 335 mice.

2018: 1128 domestic treatments undertaken of which 668 were for rats and 336 mice.

2019: 566 domestic treatments undertaken of which 319 were for rats and 89 mice.

(25) Councillor Osborne – Dog Poo Fines

How many fixed penalty notices have been issued by the environmental enforcement team as a result of catching dog owners not picking up after their dogs? How many of these FPNs have been paid and therefore how much income has this generated for the council?

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

One Fixed Penalty Notice has been issued for dog fouling since the 1st April 2019, which has generated £75 income to the council.

It should be noted that catching perpetrators in the act is very difficult. Keep Britain Tidy research shows that some dog owners act irresponsibly when they think they are not being watched., this makes it very difficult to catch owners as they are more likely to pick up when people are around, especially our Environmental Enforcement Officers.

We rely on intelligence from residents and complainants. We ask questions to gather information via our website and the contact centre, including: times and locations that the dog is walked; the breed/type of dog and any distinguishing features and the description of owner.

This depends on whether witnesses will give statements on offenders but not many people want to do this.