



Councillor Nancy Platts
Labour Group Member for East Brighton Ward
C/o Hove Town Hall
Norton Road
Hove
BN3 3BQ

Dear Geoff,

I am submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the Policy and Resources Recovery Sub-Committee meeting on 3rd March 2021.

It is clear that this decade will be defined by the choices made in response to economic and social fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, as well as the ongoing climate crisis.

The impact of Covid-19 on our city's economy has been profound. We know how tough this time is for our local businesses with many fighting to stay afloat and for people who have lost their jobs and are struggling to make ends meet.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also exposed deep flaws and inequalities within our society, but it has also shown that huge resources can be mobilised when the political will exists.

We have learnt through this global pandemic how much we can do for ourselves to help our families, our neighbours and others, and how desperately we need good public services. We understand how important it is to value our healthcare and other key workers, how it is possible to bring homeless people off the street and support those facing hardship. We know how enjoyable it is to have cleaner air, quieter streets, to walk in green spaces and to hear the birds sing.

As we start to recover from this health emergency, we have the chance to build on what we have learnt to create a safer, fairer, cleaner, greener and more sustainable city; a place in which everyone can make a living and enjoy life without facing discrimination; a place where people can afford to find a home, that celebrates the importance of nature and culture and understands the need to tackle the ever-worsening climate crisis.

Our society and our city needs a coronavirus recovery plan that doesn't just attempt to return us to 'normality', but a recovery plan that actually builds back better; a plan that protects public services, tackles inequality, provides secure well-paid jobs, improves quality of life and creates a more resilient economy which can combat the climate emergency.

The Labour Group of Councillors feel strongly that so far, the government's recovery plans are not enough to deliver the change our country and our city wants and needs.

The Build Back Better campaign urges¹ any coronavirus recovery plan be built on the principles of:

- Securing the health and needs of everyone in the UK now and into the future
- Protecting and investing in our public services
- Rebuilding society with a transformative Green New Deal – green jobs could be crucial for a sustainable, economic recovery and we want to see more of them here in Brighton & Hove
- Investing in people over big corporations
- Building solidarity and community across borders, ensuring our recovery leaves no-one behind

I hope committee members will agree with me that the key demands of the Build Back Better campaign are in line with many of the priorities put forward in both Labour and Green manifestos ahead of the last local elections, and with the priorities set out in the council's corporate plan.

I am calling on the Chair of the Recovery Sub-Committee and Leader of the Council, to endorse the Build Back Better campaign and commit to ensuring our city's economic recovery plans are aligned with the campaign's aims and principles.

Local Councillors play a vital role in understanding the impact of national policy on their communities. We are responsible for raising the voices of local people so they are heard in the Council and providing feedback to Whitehall and Westminster. To this end, will the Committee Chair join me in writing to the Secretary of State, to demand support for a national Build Back Better plan through comprehensive national policy reform, and to work with other councils and the LGA to advance the aims of the campaign?

I am also strongly of the belief that the debate around how we Build Back Better post-pandemic must not be had by Councillors alone – we need a city-wide debate that benefits from the contribution of ideas and initiatives from our residents. We are already seeing the positive impact of engaging with residents through the city's first ever Climate Assembly, and the online "Let's Talk Climate Change" hub which is gathering brilliant ideas from our residents. Will the Committee Chair ask officers to set up an online "Build Back Better" hub in the same vein, so that we can gather the thoughts and ideas of our residents on how to best recover from this pandemic?

Will the Committee Chair also invite the organisers of the Build Back Better campaign to run a session for Brighton & Hove City Councillors on what practical steps we as representatives can take to make the aims of the campaign a reality?

With the vaccine rollout well underway, there is light at the end of the tunnel, and we are all hopeful of overcoming this unprecedented pandemic. Whilst remaining vigilant

¹ [Build Back Better: The UK Coronavirus Recovery Campaign \(buildbackbetteruk.org\)](https://buildbackbetteruk.org)

in driving down Covid-19 transmission, we must also look ahead to how we plan to recover from this crisis and what kind of society we want to live in.

I want our communities to live in one that is built back better; one that protects public services, tackles inequality and combats the climate crisis, so I hope committee members will join me in lobbying government to embrace the aims of the Build Back Better campaign, and commit Brighton & Hove City Council to doing the same.

Best wishes

Councillor Nancy Platts

