

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

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

(1) Councillor Fishleigh:

How many tickets have been issued for fly tipping at Saltdean Oval's recycling point?

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

36 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued at the Saltdean Oval recycling point from April 2020 to 16 March 2021.

(2) Councillor Fishleigh:

When will the people living in vans and the vehicles that are parked permanently at Black Rock, along Madeira Drive and East Brighton Park be moved on or given parking tickets?

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

Possession orders have been obtained in relation to Black Rock. Legal are preparing an application relating to Madeira Drive. However, the Court has imposed conditions on the possession order which does not allow us to enforce it while we are in lockdown. We will have to wait and see what the Government says in relation to the lifting of restrictions. Parking tickets were issued but this generated some very challenging behaviour from some of the van dwellers residing on Madeira Drive and it was not felt to be safe for officers to attend again unless accompanied by Police officers.

A possession order will also be sought to move the lived-in vehicles gathered at East Brighton Park; the order is likely to have the same condition that enforcement can only be taken once lockdown restrictions have been lifted.

Over the course of the lockdown people have been offered accommodation – no-one has taken up that offer - and there have been regular visits where health and welfare checks have been made.

All occupants of the vehicles have been told that they can be accommodated if they would like accommodation. There have been regular visits where health and welfare checks have been made and contact details provided should they have any welfare concerns.

(3) Councillor Appich - EU Citizens:

EU citizens legally resident in the UK are able to vote in the 2021 local elections in England. EU citizens currently retain their right to vote in local elections even though the UK has already left the EU, and do not required settled or pre settled status to be able to register to vote. Despite that, half of EU citizens resident in the UK are not registered to vote.

Given that we have two by-elections and the PCC elections in May, I'd like to know how we are encouraging EU citizens to register to vote.

I would also like an update on the numbers of EU citizens in the city who have applied for settled and pre settled status, how we are encouraging EU citizens to apply for settled status, and what assistance we are giving to people who are finding it difficult to apply or have difficulties in obtaining settled status.

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

EU Citizens – Registering to vote

The ERO undertook the annual canvass from July through to February. Correspondence was sent to all properties in the city, via post and/or email, confirming eligibility to vote – including that EU electors can register to vote. The ERO and RO's communications prior to the election will be encouraging all residents who are not registered to register. The BHCC website, paper registration forms sent by the ERO and gov.uk's Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service all confirm eligibility.

EU Settlement Scheme Support in Brighton & Hove

Migrant Help are continuing to provide advice in Brighton & Hove for vulnerable EU citizens who need help to register under the EU Settlement Scheme.

Migrant Help adviser Charlotte Cheeseman continues to provide remote advice and application support across East Sussex & Surrey. Contact details can be found on the council's Brexit in Brighton & Hove online pages.

Voices in Exile are working with rough sleepers in the city as part of the Everyone In scheme to ensure they are able to apply to the EUSS.

The council have developed a programme of support with Brighton Chamber for local businesses to assist them with the changes related to Brexit. An event has already taken place highlighting the requirements of the new immigration system and the next event in April 2021 will focus on the new system and the EUSS: <https://www.brightonchamber.co.uk/event/your-questions-answered-the-uks-new-immigration-system>

The council's adult social care team are working with immigration lawyers (Fragomen) to provide an advice session for care providers in the city on the EUSS and the requirements of the new immigration system.

The council are working with Seraphus immigration solicitors to provide free legal advice to EU citizens in the city through online surgeries and hopefully in some physical form in the future depending on COVID restrictions, which have impacted all EUSS support throughout the last year.

The council still awaits the Home Office guidance on what will constitute an allowable late application and is in contact with the Independent monitoring Authority for the Citizens' Rights Agreements (<https://ima-citizensrights.org.uk/>)

to highlight emerging challenges and barriers to applicants applying to the scheme as well as sharing best practice.

EU Settlement Scheme Communications

The council has undertaken a number of communication actions to raise awareness of the EU Settlement Scheme in the city, through advertising and messaging through council and partnership networks:

- Latest news story (23rd March 2021) on EU Settlement Scheme - **Only 100 days remain to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme**: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2021/only-100-days-remain-apply-eu-settlement-scheme>
- A postcard raising awareness of the EUSS and encouraging EU citizens to apply to the scheme has been distributed to all households in the city. This initiative has been welcomed by EU citizens and heralded as an example of good practice. Positive feedback has been received from national campaign groups as well as a neighbouring local authorities who made contact to request permission to replicate the work.
- A video featuring Cllr Ebel, Chair of the Brexit Working Group, calling for EU citizens to apply to the EUSS has been widely shared on social media: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-FUyfpRubo>
- EUSS adverts are being displayed on digital bus shelters citywide and posters have also been placed across the city.
- Editorial and adverts about the EUSS have featured in local, community magazines including:
 - Gscene
 - The Argus
 - The Scroll
 - The Brightonian
 - The Hovarian
 - The North Laine Runner
- The council's Brexit webpages provide information on the scheme including signposting to support as well as an aftercare section covering what EU citizens should do after they have applied to the scheme.
 - <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/brexit-brighton-hove>
- Messaging on the EUSS will also be going to schools and nurseries in the city in the coming weeks.

Further communications are being planned as we get closer to the deadline on 30th June 2021 and potential resources to help EU citizens in the city access their online status – to assist with employment, housing and access to services – are being developed.

Brighton & Hove - EU Settlement Scheme Home Office Quarterly Statistics (February 2021)

The Home Office release quarterly statistics providing the number of applications to the scheme. In February 2021 the Home Office reported that 26,550 EU citizens from Brighton & Hove had applied to the scheme so far. Available statistics are outlined below and the next release from the Home Office is expected in May 2021.

Home Office EU Settlement Scheme Quarterly Statistics
Brighton & Hove

	28 th Aug 2018 – 30 th Sep 2019 (Released 7 th Nov 2019)	28 th Aug 2018 – 31 st Dec 2019 (Released 6 th Feb 2020)	28 th Aug 2018 – 31 st March 2020 (Released 14 th May 2020)	28 th Aug 2018 – 30 th June 2020 (Released 27 th Aug 2020)	28 th Aug 2018 – 30 th Sept 2020 (Released 26 th November 2020)	28 th Aug 2018 – 31 st Dec 2020 (Released 25 th Feb 2021)
Applications to the scheme	9750	14970	18690	20280	22140	26550
Granted Settled Status	4860	7550	9430	10380	11340	12690
Granted Pre-Settled Status	3140	5960	7640	8410	9550	11550
Other outcome*	70	120	220	280	440	570
Applications still in process	1680	1340	1410	1210	810	1740

Nationality

Austria	60	80	100	110	120	140
Belgium	90	120	150	160	180	230
Bulgaria	310	430	520	570	620	750
Croatia	30	30	60	60	70	100
Cyprus	50	100	140	150	170	240
Czech. Rep.	180	330	410	440	470	540
Denmark	60	90	110	140	140	190
Estonia	40	50	80	80	90	110
Finland	80	130	160	170	190	210
France	650	1020	1290	1380	1510	1830
Germany	520	730	890	960	1050	1270
Greece	460	710	880	950	1020	1320
Hungary	530	810	980	1060	1120	1310
Iceland	20	30	40	40	40	50
Ireland (Irish nationals not required to apply but can if they wish)	20	30	40	40	50	70
Italy	1720	2680	3280	3510	3800	4420
Latvia	180	270	320	340	360	400
Lichtenstein	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lithuania	310	430	530	580	610	71
Luxembourg	Between 1-9	10	20	20	20	30
Malta	20	30	30	40	40	60
Netherlands	220	300	380	420	460	550
Norway	50	80	110	110	130	180
Poland	1030	1540	1950	2110	2270	2660
Portugal	510	780	930	990	1060	1210
Romania	600	900	1140	1340	1580	1960
Slovakia	210	320	420	450	470	530
Slovenia	20	30	40	40	40	50
Spain	1190	1980	2480	2660	2910	3390
Sweden	250	370	460	490	550	700
Switzerland	40	90	120	130	140	190
Non - EAA	320	480	650	740	870	1170
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Age Group						
Under 18	660	1050	1320	1450	1630	2120
18 to 64	8840	13550	16890	18330	19970	23810
65+	240	360	480	510	540	610

*Other outcome refers to 'refused applications, withdrawn or void applications & invalid applications'.

(4) Councillor Childs – Housing sites in Freshfield Road:

Given the dire housing shortage in our city, what action will the Administration take to unlock the 10 priority housing development sites in our city, and in particular the Freshfield Road Industrial Estate site, for new homes?

Reply from Councillor Hugh-Jones, Joint Chair of the Housing Committee

Providing additional affordable homes is a key priority in our Housing Committee Work Plan 2019-23. This includes achieving 800 additional council homes and 700 other additional affordable homes. Since April 2019, over 220 additional rented council homes have been provided across the city. The council is projected to deliver up to 199 additional homes in 2021/22. Homes for Brighton & Hove, the council’s partnership with Hyde, will deliver 346 homes at the first two sites, with work due to commence in Summer 2021. A total of 1,025 homes are projected to be delivered by partner Registered Providers between 2019 and 2023 (311 rent and 714 shared ownership).

With regard to unlocking priority housing development sites. Following the decision of Budget Council, we will be recruiting a project officer to work closely with colleagues across the council, Homes England, the industry and landowners on mechanisms to help deliver difficult housing sites.

With regard to Freshfield Road. City Plan Policy DA5 of the CPP1 identifies Freshfield industrial estate as part of the Eastern Road and Edward Street Development Area. The policy recognises that the Freshfield site is well occupied and only likely to come forward in the longer term.

While the council owns the freehold of the Freshfield Industrial Estate, it is let on a number of very long leases of 92 years and more. The council is unable to unilaterally terminate these interests.

There are only a few Industrial Estates in the City and a number of them are protected in the City Plan. The market has improved for industrial uses due to the increased demand and lack of space particularly over the pandemic where industrial warehousing/distribution space is at a premium. Given this council’s commitment to community wealth building and the change in retail habits, people’s ability to work from home and the housing crisis, we should be considering the potential for alternative uses for existing office space and retail units, including potentially as workshop space.

(5) Councillor Allcock – Use and cost of Agency Teaching Staff:

What were the costs of using agency teaching staff in the City’s maintained and voluntary aided schools in comparison with directly employed teaching staff for financial years:

- 2018 to 2019
- 2019 to 2020
- 2020 to 2021

What agencies were used during these financial years?

Did the cost of using agencies vary, and if so what was the difference?

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

Schools are responsible for decisions in relation to the management of their budget and staff and how they resource this. The Council holds some data related to this as part of finance information that we receive but the Council does not hold detailed information as each individual school will have this and they do not provide detailed information to the Council. We will send the figures to Cllr Allcock but the headline figures for each financial year are:

2018/19 - direct supply £1.2m - agency staff £3.2m

2019/20 – direct supply £1.2m - agency staff £3.5m

2020/21 so far – direct supply £1m - agency staff £1.7m

The current financial year spend only covers 10 months as the year has not ended yet, but this will be substantially lower than previous years, likely due to the fact that schools have not been open as normal during the pandemic.

The Council does not hold information regarding the agencies used by schools or the unit costs of those agencies. Please note that the figures for agency spend also includes non-teaching agency staff as this is not separated out in financial information, we receive but it is likely the majority of spend will be agency teaching staff.

Regarding the Council’s Plan commitment around reintroducing a LA support teacher service, work has been undertaken to scope out a high level range of options in relation to this commitment and the next stage will be to engage with teaching unions and headteachers including gauging interest from schools and researching the costs and usage of using agency supply teachers in schools to understand the implications and benefits of an in house service and what the costs would be of different options.

(6) Councillor Williams – No Recourse to Public Funds:

Why has Brighton & Hove City Council been tangled up in court battles with regard to ‘no recourse to public funds’ rough sleepers? Can you explain the

outcome of the recent court judgement and what Brighton & Hove City Council will be doing in the future for this vulnerable group?

Reply from Councillor Hugh-Jones, Joint Chair of the Housing Committee

Many thanks to Cllr Williams for her question which is no doubt for the benefit of anyone who missed my chair's communications at March Housing Committee. NRPF refers to those who have had a no recourse to public funds condition imposed on their grant of limited leave to remain or enter the UK, or whom are failed asylum seekers. The NRPF condition does not, prior to 31 December 2020, apply those who are exercising an EU right to reside under the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016 (as they do not need permission to enter or remain section (7(1) Immigration Act 1988)) or, post 31 December 2020 those that have a retained enforceable EU right through the EU Settlement Scheme.

There has been some discussion in the press recently of a case concerning a failed asylum seeker in Brighton who sought accommodation under the "Everyone In" scheme.

At the time the claim was initiated, the individual had not yet applied for accommodation via the Home Office, which in the view of the Council was where the primary statutory duty arose. The court accepted that argument at the first hearing, and he was eventually accommodated by the Home Office, where he remains.

The case then moved to be on a point of law which was in essence whether LAs had power to accommodate people with NRPF. The Claimants were seeking a direction that we had acted unlawfully by not considering that power. The court chose not to make that declaration. The council's argument was this was all academic since he was by now accommodated and it had not acted unlawfully but had followed the express position of the government that the position on NRPF remained.

A letter from the government dated 22 September reminded us that "Local authorities must ensure that any support offered to non-UK nationals who are not eligible for homelessness assistance complies with legal restrictions (for example, the restrictions contained in Schedule 3 to the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002)"

Many councils, including BHCC, called for suspension of these provisions for at least the duration of the pandemic but the government refused. This has been the root cause of problems locally and we continue to push government to reconsider their inhumane approach to those who are restricted by the national immigration and asylum act.

What the court has concluded is that where there is a danger to life and limb- and where other duties (such as that of the Home Office) cannot resolve it- then there is a fact-specific power to accommodate.

We would ideally like the MHCLG to now clarify that where LAs are exercising such a power it falls within the funding allocated for “Everyone In” accommodation but we certainly welcome the court judgment on the point that we have powers we can use where it is appropriate. This is the minimum we want to see government offer councils to ensure better protection for those in need.

In addition to very limited powers the council may have, following careful consideration of individual circumstances, it is recommended that individuals consider applying directly to the Home Office for relief and that the council signposts to other specialist dedicated sources of support. As you will be aware, Housing Committee have also recommended that council officers work with the local community and voluntary sector organisations to provide clear information for rough sleepers with NRPF who the Council cannot accommodate, including sources of support and assistance.

Beyond this case, Green Councillors have slammed ‘discriminatory,’ rule changes that could see migrants deported if they become homeless, saying new rules will harm and undermine vital homelessness prevention work in the city.

Changes to immigration rules means rough sleeping can now be considered a basis for refusal, or cancellation, of permission to remain in the UK.

Greens join many other political parties, homelessness and migrant support organisations in condemning the rule changes, affirming that work to help vulnerable rough sleepers in the city find secure accommodation will continue.

(7) Councillor Williams – Madeira Drive:

There is chaos on Madeira Drive. Pedestrians cannot socially distance due to ridiculously narrow paths and are forced to take their lives in their hands by just trying take a much-needed walk. What is being done about this?

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

Madeira Drive was initially closed between Dukes Mound and the Palace Pier Roundabout to facilitate walking and cycling for local residents during the very first lockdown. Although the closure was generally supported there were concerns from traders and blue badge holders as access was limited to changing places facilities and the beach, there were also safety concerns as some vehicles were authorised to access the route without requisite enforcement powers being available to the Police to enforce speeding, conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians or other traffic violations under the closure Traffic Order..

As on the 29th September, last year, approval was granted to commence detailed-design and the Traffic Regulation Order process to re-open Madeira Drive one-way eastbound, to improve Blue Badge access and parking capacity and to relocate the cycle track from the footway promenade onto the

carriageway, therefore safely segregating cyclists from pedestrians, to improve both cycle capacity and pedestrian provision.

The first stage of delivering these improvements took place in October last year and has seen the re-opening of Madeira Drive one-way to address access issues for traders and blue badge holder as well as some of the immediate safety and access concerns. The Council are currently implementing the second phase of the approved scheme. This second phase will provide a clearly dedicated two -way, accessible cycle facility on the southside of the carriageway with reallocated parking. In relocating the cycle route onto the carriageway more space will be allocated to pedestrians and localised pavement widening will provide better pedestrian facilities enhancing social distancing opportunities.

These improvements are currently in their construction phase with planned completion in May.

The scheme itself will be implemented under an Experimental Traffic Order which will be advertised on the Councils webpages and on the highway once the construction phase is complete this will allow a further 6 month consultation opportunity before the results are reported, along with recommendations, to the appropriate Environment Transport and Sustainability Committee.

Furthermore, the Madeira Drive improvement scheme links directly with the Dukes Mound Development scheme which proposes further pedestrian enhancements including a formal pedestrian crossing on Madeira Drive at the east of Dukes Mound and localised footway widening.

To support these changes to Madeira Drive a Traffic regulation Order will be advertised proposing a reduction in the speed limit from 30miles per hour to 20 miles per hour, along the entire route between Palace Pier roundabout to Black Rock.

(8) Councillor Williams – Housing Dispute:

The dispute with housing repair workers transferred over from the former Mears contract has been rumbling on for some time. Can this council confirm that the present Administration is not anti-union and explain why this dispute is taking so long to resolve?

Reply from Councillor Gibson, Joint Chair of the Housing Committee

My thanks once again to Cllr Williams for bringing this question for the benefit of those unable to attend March's Housing Committee and for stepping in for Cllr Platts to sit on the recent Policy & Resources Committee which signed off the agreement reached.

The dispute related to a pay dispute that GMB lodged with MEARS before the transfer. That dispute transferred to the council when the service came in-house. There were some complex issues to resolve, and throughout 2020 there were detailed and constructive discussions with GMB to reach an agreement that maintained fairness and equality in our pay arrangements and resolved the

dispute. Agreement was reached in January and an announcement made to that effect on the Council website on 26 January. Certain aspects of the harmonisation process then had to happen before the agreement could be signed off by Policy & Resources Committee – which, as you know, happened earlier this month.

We are now moving to implement the agreement, and to make an offer to all transferred staff to move onto council terms and conditions if they choose to do so. This process involves individual and collective consultation, but we are really pleased that all staff received offers of council terms and conditions by 19th March. We are currently carrying out extensive discussions with staff to ensure all questions are answered about council terms, ahead of 1st April when individuals will decide whether to accept the offer. As has been the case throughout, staff can choose to stay on their Mears terms and conditions if they feel these are more advantageous to them.

I am not sure what has prompted the enquiry about this administration being “anti-union”. I can absolutely confirm that this administration is not anti-union. Throughout the dispute, Cllr Gibson and I have sought to appreciate the union’s concerns and help break the deadlock. We were clear from the outset that we wanted to understand the history of the dispute, that emerged before our administration but also to listen to unions and work constructively to resolve it. We have had three or four in-person meetings (which, incidentally, is three or four more meetings than I have had with any member of my own family this last year) as well as a number of remote meetings with officers present and regular phone calls. Indeed, if there is any criticism to be made, it would probably come from officers who may feel we have been too “hands on”. Nevertheless, these meetings helped to highlight further issues and progress finding solutions. Far from being anti-union, we consider our unions to be a cornerstone of workers’ rights and many of our green group of councillors are members of unions or former employees in the trade union movement. Indeed it is Green Party policy to go far beyond mere support for trade unions: among many policies we advocate for that would give unions a greater role, we want to see every worker given the legal right to be represented by a trade union in dealings with their employer, no matter the sector; we want legislation that would mean all employers are legally obliged to recognise unions; we oppose and seek abolition of conditions and loopholes that unfairly restrict statutory union recognition. We also want to see the provision of education on the benefits of trade unions, in schools and in the community, so that people can learn of the benefits of unions. It is patently clear that the Conservative government has sought over many years to restrict the role of unions – moves we oppose.

More generally, we are committed to retrofitting the council’s own housing stock and encouraging homeowners and landlords in the city to do the same. This should create hundreds of new skilled jobs and potential new union members, so I look forward to continuing to work constructively with all unions over the coming years, and with our brilliant housing staff. Now the dispute is resolved we are looking forward to a more proactive engagement with unions to achieve our ambitious joint housing programme and expanding employment and apprenticeship opportunities.

(9) Councillor Moonan – Vaccination Uptake:

What has been the percentage vaccination uptake rate for the top 4 government priority groups in Brighton & Hove specifically, for the last three months? Why has there been a delay in meeting the 90% target rate for the over 80 age group? What percentage rates of Black and minority ethnic groups have accessed vaccinations across Brighton & Hove as a whole and at ward level, and how does this compare to national averages?

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

Across the Sussex COVID-19 vaccination programme, significant progress has been made since the programme launched in December, and thanks to the hard work of vaccination teams across all services thousands of people within our communities have been vaccinated. We achieved the first milestone in February to offer the vaccination to everyone in the first four priority groups, and we are on track to have now offered the vaccination to everyone in the nine JCVI priority groups by mid-April in line with the Government target.

In Brighton and Hove, more than 113,500 vaccinations have been delivered to residents in the city to date, including 109,000 first dose vaccinations. In the priority group of those age 80 and above, more than 87.9% of the population have now received their first dose, and appointments are starting to take place for second doses.

In terms of the uptake across the first four priority groups, there is publicly available data updated weekly by NHS England setting out the percentage uptake and the ethnicity of those vaccinated. The release of reportable data is controlled by the NHS. It is anticipated that the Council will provide some of the uptake data at Medium Super Output Area level on the Covid local statistics website. Across all four cohorts, the uptake within the public priority groups is higher than 80%. This data now brings those aged 80 and over together with health and social care workforce as a combined figure for cohort 2, and as a result demonstrates the need for continued focus across all partners to further uptake amongst care staff. Specific actions being taken here include direct contact with care homes and individual staff members to address concerns on a 121 basis.

We recognise from the data that there are some communities in Brighton and Hove where uptake could be higher, and this links to areas of deprivation and BAME communities. Targeted outreach work is taking place in the city to address hesitancy and challenge barriers such as transport and access. A roving service, with a team in an ambulance, is visiting communities and a bus is expected to go live this month. These models are working directly with communities to provide supportive environments for those eligible to receive their vaccination and since they launched at the end of last week, we are already seeing positive engagement and an increase in vaccinations. The NHS and Brighton & Hove City Council is also working together on a focused communication campaign to promote the vaccination programme, increase uptake and provide a range of materials tailored for communities across the city.

(10) Councillor Janio

Has a Safety Audit been completed for the Temporary Cycle Lanes on the Old Shoreham Road?

- a. If a Safety Audit has been completed, are the published plans for work along the Old Shoreham Road designed to reverse any negative findings within the report?
- b. If a Safety Audit has not been completed – why not?

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

Yes, I can confirm that a Road Safety Audit was undertaken, however it didn't identify any major concerns, although it did include a few recommendations to improve safety along the cycle route such as improved signage which has been carried out, there are also longer term improvements that will be considered should phase 2 of the Scheme go ahead.

(11) Councillor Janio

Has a 'Sustainability' report been completed for the Temporary Cycle Lanes on the Old Shoreham Road and, given the increase in traffic congestion at the junctions, why have portable pollution monitors not been placed along the Old Shoreham Road to detect any increase in emissions, which are certain to increase to even higher levels than those reported now, as we move out of lockdown?

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

There was no specific requirement for a sustainability report for the temporary cycle lanes and therefore no air quality data is currently available, however officers are arranging permanent monitoring areas along the Old Shoreham Road and will be put in place in the near future. We want to provide residents safe areas where they can choose safe and sustainable transport to help improve safety and air quality. We have evidence that this works from many transport schemes nationwide. by creating a safe, sustainable alternative to the car, while this can create an initial increase in traffic, in the medium to long term it creates safer and cleaner streets. As people find that alternatives to the car like walking and cycling improves health, improves fitness, improves air quality, improve the safety of our streets and our city.

(12) Councillor Janio

Does any government 'Emergency Covid Guidance' exist that allows for Sustainability Assessments to be either not completed or ignored whilst designing and implementing local transport schemes?

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

We are not aware of Sustainability Assessment guidance contained within current Emergency Covid Guidance. However, it is worth noting that the Active Travel measures that have been implemented are by their very nature an attempt to provide more sustainable travel choices and improve our streets long term.

(13) Councillor Janio

To be certain that the proposed permanent cycle lanes on the Old Shoreham Road will not lead to even greater increases in gaseous and Carbon emissions, have officers suggested to councillors within the administration that a monitoring plan of the currently configured temporary cycle lanes should be considered, once lockdown has ended, before the temporary scheme is made permanent?

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

No current plans exist to make the temporary scheme permanent and will need to undergo further consultation if plans and funding emerge. The cycle lanes along Old Shoreham Road were put in place as emergency works as part of providing additional active travel capacity during the Covid-19 lockdown, however we will have more time to assess the impact of any further measures. We have just finished consultation with thousands of residents across the city, for which officers are currently assessing the feedback for and monitoring plans will be in place for any further alterations. Officers will put their findings together which will be presented to ETS Committee and put to a vote. However, as I say, any permanent plans for these improvements would need further consultation and not be part of this process.

Following a great deal of interest in transport data for the Old Shoreham Road, I would like to clarify the situation from the council.

The council has in place permanent cycle counters on the Old Shoreham Road, these are located at Avondale Road (Site 974), The Upper Drive (site 975) and Aldrington Avenue (site 976). Site 976 was put in place in September 2020, the other two sites have been in place for a number of years. The data for all of these sites is available publicly and can be found on our website by searching 'traffic counts' to navigate to the traffic count webpage and then clicking on the Google Map link.

Following a recent Freedom of Information (FOI) request, we provided the enquirer with the data the council holds for these permanent cycle counters in this area. This is the standard procedure for requests. Due to IT issues with obtaining and analysing the data from the data provider, this data took longer than expected to obtain and the response was unfortunately late.

The council also occasionally collects temporary cycle count data for scheme-specific purposes, this is not collated centrally or published in the same way as

the permanent count data. The Department for Transport (DfT) also carry out traffic counts nationally, these are published on their website. For the Old Shoreham Road, DfT had carried out a temporary (7-day) traffic count near Lullington Avenue in June 2016. The council had also carried out a temporary (7-day) traffic count at Lullington Avenue in July 2020. These datasets were not originally provided with the FOI response however we have since apologised and sent this data to the enquirer. The data from these datasets has been used to show levels of cycling along Old Shoreham Road – from 339 cyclists per day on average in June 2016 to 545 cyclists per day on average in July 2020 – a 61% increase in cycling levels. This data has been used in council documents including the Tranche 2 bid for the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) in August 2020, and the September 2020 report for the Environment, Transport and Sustainability (ETS) committee alongside a range of other data.

Regarding the Tranche 2 EATF bid, the figures from the temporary cycle counts were used. While some key information was included in the bid (number of cyclists per day in 2020 compared to 2016), some of the specific details of the cycle counts (specific dates, duration and specific location of counts on the Old Shoreham Road) were omitted. This was an unintentional oversight and it was therefore entirely appropriate for us to go back to DfT with these clarifications, which we have now done.

All of the data mentioned has been accurate and we have in no way intentionally withheld or manipulated data.

Now that we have successfully received funding from DfT for the Active Travel Fund, we are developing further plans for comprehensive monitoring of schemes in future, which will be funded by DfT.

(14) Councillor Wilkinson

Cycle Hangars

Are there any plans to install cycle hangers across the city and if so how many cycle hangars will be installed/are estimated to be installed across the city in 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 and could you explain what the methodology is of choosing locations for those cycle hangars?

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

At Budget Council a £500k capital allocation was provisioned for providing circa 100 Bike Hangars across the City, alongside a £20k revenue allocation to develop a Business Case and methodology for the proposed rollout and potential future capital and revenue implications for providing these facilities. Further details relating to rollout and locations will be identified following allocation of a project officer and completion of the Business Case.

(15) Councillor Wilkinson

Funding for Green Spaces and Growing Projects

I am keen to ensure that areas in my Central Hove ward get proper funding for green spaces and growing projects that benefit the whole community. Can you provide details of planned investment, including the use of section 106 monies, in any green spaces and projects in my ward in the coming year?

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

Cityparks provides maintenance to public areas across the city as evenly as possible. In the Central Hove Ward this includes Hove Lawns and the grass verge on Grand Avenue.

An officer met with Councillor Claire Moonan last September 2020 to explore green spaces improvements and identified two potential schemes which require a Project Officer to progress.

Cityparks are currently recruiting two new Project Officers this April to assist with the expenditure of section 106 money and who could directly assist with your Ward.

We would hope that once the Project Officers are in post, an agreed improvement plan can be developed, along with a timetable for delivery.

Unfortunately, at present it is capacity that slows down identifying funding, developing projects and implementation initiatives which Cityparks are sure all Councillors can appreciate.

Cityparks have successfully recruited two new tree officers to assist with tree planting. This additional resource working with the Plant Your Postcode initiative and others, may also provide an opportunity for tree planting to the streets of Central Hove.

(16) Councillor Wilkinson

5G Upgrades

Will the Council ensure that residents living near telecommunications aerials are fully informed, even when their consent is immaterial, before any upgrade to 5G?

Reply from Councillor Littman, Chair of the Planning Committee

Under planning rules, the installation of telecoms equipment may not always need permission, some can be installed under what is called permitted development – this is when planning permission is not required. In such circumstances, though the operator does notify the Local Planning Authority, there isn't a requirement to notify neighbours. I can confirm that officers have

agreed to explore the option of displaying a site notice in these circumstances to make residents aware of the notification. It will also need to make clear, however, that there is not a right of objection under government rules.

The two other categories are prior approval and full planning permission, both of which involve consultation rules set nationally and expanded on locally in the adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

So, for planning applications and prior approvals – normally required for larger installations - letters are sent to residents adjacent or immediately opposite, a site notice is displayed and the proposal will be in the weekly list of applications. If the application is in a Conservation Area it will also be listed in the Evening Argus.