

Resident Questions for Housing Area Panel

Reference: N3.1

Question Title	Poor maintenance of verges, pavements and
Date question raised	19/12/2022
Week of Area Panel	13/2/2023
Area in city	North
Star rating applied by residents	3 stars – city wide
Deadline for officer response	9am on 19 th January
Name of officer responding	Melissa Francis
Officer job title	Head of Operations, CityClean

Resident Question

Issue:	The city is falling into disrepair and neglect due to lack of regular maintenance.
Background:	<p>As raised at previous Residents' Only meetings across the city, the maintenance of Brighton and Hove's roads, paths, verges, green areas, and public highways has been grossly neglected.</p> <p><i>{Examples:}</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents in Moulsecoomb have resorted to clearing weeds and overgrown verges themselves. • A resident in Hollingdean has noticed that there have been no road sweepers in the area for at least 2 years. <p>Council officers' response to this issue has been lack of staffing. Residents were informed at the last Area Panel that "the Council has taken measures to address these problems, increasing pay for the lowest paid workers which means that we are now getting more applicants for jobs and earmarking some money to deal with the crumbling infrastructure in the parks".</p>
Action requested:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residents are surprised that there is a problem with recruitment when so many people are looking for work. Are the Council being proactive and creative enough in the way they are publicising and recruiting for new staff? - Residents suggested using Community Payback to deal with understaffing issues in Residents Questions raised at the last Area Panel. This suggestion was not addressed by the officer in their written response. Residents request a response to this suggestion.

	<p>- Is the Council planning to reinstate a regular maintenance schedule, once staff are recruited, to cut back trees and bushes, deal with weeds and overgrown verges, ensure streets are cleaned and more generally that the city is kept to a decent standard? When can residents expect maintenance to return to acceptable levels?</p>
--	--

Officer Response

Officer contact details:	Melissa.Francis@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Officer Response:	<p>Residents are surprised that there is a problem with recruitment when so many people are looking for work. Are the Council being proactive and creative enough in the way they are publicising and recruiting for new staff?</p> <p>The Council is proactive in publicising and recruiting new staff. Last year CityClean organised an 'open day' for people looking for work who may struggle to complete online applications. The event was held in Bartholomew House, staff from across the Council were on hand to help candidates to complete applications. In addition, the Council ran a pre-employment course called 'Get Started At CityClean'. Anyone attending the course was guaranteed an interview. We attended recruitment fairs at the Job Centre and University (summer jobs for students). We also ran advertising campaigns. In 2022 it was widely reported a labour shortage and other industries such as the hospitality industry were also struggling with recruitment.</p> <p>Residents suggested using Community Payback to deal with understaffing issues in Residents Questions raised at the last Area Panel. This suggestion was not addressed by the officer in their written response. Residents request a response to this suggestion.</p> <p>During the summer of 2022 CityClean were in regular contact with Community Payback particularly for weeding. Unfortunately, they were not able to supply anyone.</p> <p>Is the Council planning to reinstate a regular maintenance schedule, once staff are recruited, to cut back trees and bushes, deal with weeds and overgrown verges, ensure streets are cleaned and more generally that the city is kept to a decent standard? When can residents expect maintenance to return to acceptable levels.</p> <p>Recruitment is still a challenge. We have recently advertised 12 vacancies and have been able to recruit to 6. Cityparks has also struggled with recruitment. Cuts to funding means there is less budget available for services, and this is unlikely to improve soon with the cost of living crisis and inflationary rises which impacts Council budgets. The Street Cleansing service work hard to deliver a good service within the resources available.</p>
Action:	N/A
Start date:	N/A
End date:	N/A