

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Council

## Agenda Item 76

**Subject:** Written questions from Councillors.

**Date of meeting:** 2 February 2023

**Report of:** Executive Director for Governance, People & Resources

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

### For general release

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

#### 1. Councillor Grimshaw

##### **Housing Repairs:**

How many repair call outs for both Brighton & Hove City Council and KTS have been recorded as 'resident not home' over the past two years?

##### **Reply from Councillor Gibson / Hugh-Jones, Joint Chairs of the Health & Wellbeing Board**

Thank you for your question.

The Council Housing Repairs & Maintenance service currently completes over 2,000 repairs every month (Quarter 2, 2022/23) with performance indicators on our resident satisfaction measures, including repairs standard of work and customer service, all above target.

The Council's Housing Repairs & Maintenance service recorded 7,635 repair call outs as missed through no access between January 2021 and January 2023. This equates to 318 per month. Much of this time aligns to the Covid pandemic where we had significant issues with resident access.

Out of the 7,635 call outs, 2,847 were missed due to no response from the tenant when the operative attended the property.

4,788 relate to a call out at a block of flats where the operative received no response from the resident when seeking to gain access through the main entrance door or was not allowed access into the building for another reasons.

In instances when the council's operatives are unable to gain access, they will usually try and contact the tenant on the phone before leaving a calling card.

The card advises that we have called and asks the tenant to contact the service again to re-book the appointment.

The Council's contractor K&T recorded 2,411 missed call outs between January 2020 to December 2022.

## **2. Councillor Grimshaw**

### **Boiler Repairs:**

Can the Chair of Housing confirm how many emergency call outs for repairs to boilers not working were the result of batteries running out in thermostats – in relation to the total number of emergency calls outs for boiler repairs?

### **Reply from Councillor Gibson / Hugh-Jones, Joint Chairs of the Housing Committee**

Thank you for your question.

In the past year, the council has received 9,653 call outs. Of these, 448 required a Thermostat battery to be replaced, which is less than 5% of the overall number of call outs.

## **3. Councillor Sankey**

### **Budget Deficit:**

Can the Leader of the Council tell me what proportion of this year's budget deficit can be attributed to flawed assumptions and projections set out at the start of the financial year? For example, with regards to parking fees revenue, what was the difference between projected parking income for Q1 – Q3 2022/23 and the actual amount of revenue received for Q1 – Q3?

### **Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council**

The council's budget report for 2022/23 was finalised at the end of January 2022. The latest announced CPI inflation rate (December 2021) at that time was 5.4% but the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) was projecting a return to 2% inflation within 12 months. Things didn't develop as those projections indicated.

In common with most local authorities, this council's Medium Term Financial Strategy generally relies on OBR forecasts as the primary, national source of economic forecasts. As a result, most non-pay budgets were inflated by 2%, covering major externally procured goods and services such as social care providers. However, the council does not normally fully inflate its non-pay budgets in line with inflation because it aims to achieve economies and efficiencies through its procurement strategy and frameworks. This is done through improved commissioning of services, and by cash-limiting increases in things such as premises, transport, and supplies and services budgets.

Similarly, an average pay award provision of 2% was assumed. Although lower than the December 2021 CPI, previous pay awards have rarely, if ever, matched inflation. For example, in 2022/23, CPI peaked at over 10%

(RPI 14%) but the final Local Government pay award provided an average uplift of 6%.

Unfortunately, in 2022/23 several unexpected events and factors subsequently impacted on costs and economic forecasts. The invasion of Ukraine dramatically increased fuel, energy and food prices. Although fuel prices recovered to some extent, food and energy prices still remain much higher. However, other factors have also exacerbated inflation during 2022/23 including the fall-out of the pandemic which has affected many supply chains (e.g. for example, electronic goods and chip manufacture in China and the US) as well as severely impacting many labour markets (increasing recruitment and pay costs). The impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EU has also become apparent and is adding to labour market issues and costs and is impacting the cost of many items, particularly across farming, food and care services. Earlier this week the IMF published GDP forecasts with the UK the only G8 country showing negative growth. British people are paying an extra £6BN to eat; investment's been slashed 11% while, according to London Mayor Sadiq Kahn, trade in goods and services has reduced by 7%.

We must also accept that the financial turmoil caused by the brief leadership of Liz Truss and Kwasi Kwarteng and the panic this caused in the financial markets is also still being felt and recovery will take some time – and that also assumes that Conservative economic management will improve.

The overall effect has been double-digit inflation- the highest in a generation, increasing interest rates, a downturn in the economy, and a deepening cost-of-living crisis. All of these compounding factors have impacted directly on the council's costs, but have also increased demand for services and people needing support and have reduced the potential cost reductions achievable from identified savings programmes. Unlike during the pandemic, the financial support from government for these impacts has been very limited and has been restricted to additional support for homelessness and hospital winter discharge planning.

The example of Parking is given, and while this has been impacted by economic conditions, the position has steadily improved in recent months and the current forecast is a £0.829m net underachievement of income, a variance of less than 2%.

Other large savings programmes such as the 'move-on' programme for supporting Learning Disabled people to move out of, or avoid entering, institutional care and into community settings have been impacted by labour markets and the challenges in the care sector of recruiting and retaining community workers and Personal Assistants together with the substantial increase in costs, often linked to the Minimum Wage, which increased by 10%. This programme continues to be successful but inflationary impacts have undermined the savings potential.

Overall, the Targeted Budget Monitoring report for Month 9 (December 2022), shows that the council's overspend has reduced from a highpoint of £13.1m (6.1% of budget) at month 5 (August) to £6.6m at month 9 (2.7% of budget). This is due to proactive management of the budget including strict spending and vacancy controls being applied from September 2022. The position is expected to improve further, by up to £2m, over the final 3 months as strict controls will remain in place until 31 March. These controls have enabled partial but substantial mitigation of unexpectedly high

inflation and pay award costs, the failure of the economy to return to pre-pandemic levels, increased demand for services, and the impact on identified savings opportunities.

#### **4. Councillor Sankey**

##### **Cycle lane costs:**

How much parking fee revenue has the council lost in 2022/23 in relation to previous years as a result of the installation of cycle lanes on Madeira Drive and the A259?

##### **Reply from Councillor Davis / Hills, Joint Chairs of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

It is estimated for 2022/23 that a potential loss of parking income for Madeira Drive will be £330,000 and for the stretch of the A259 from Palace Pier to Fourth Avenue will be £310,000 for the year due to the reduction in permit and pay and display parking spaces. This loss of income should be measured against the policy objectives of active travel. It is essential that we allow greater accessibility to safer, cleaner and more sustainable active travel journeys which can have a significant impact on our residents mental and physical health and improve air quality throughout the city. The creation of an excellent public space on Madeira Drive and the seafront has improved walking, wheeling and cycling for residents and visitors to our city.

#### **5. Councillor Fishleigh**

##### **BHCC's property and land portfolio:**

Please provide information about BHCC's property and land asset ownership excluding homes. How many assets are there, what is the floor area, the total value - and when was it last audited? How many assets have been identified for sale, and what is their estimated value on the current open market?

##### **Reply from Councillor Gibson / Hugh-Jones, Joint Chairs of the Housing Committee**

The council has 1685 assets and this figure includes non-housing residential

Full details of the council's assets are on the council's website:

[Brighton & Hove City Council Property & Land Assets \(XLSX\) June 2019.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

Please see below for the GIA (Gross Internal Areas) floor areas for the council's operational and non-operational assets :

Operational assets have a GIA of 413,774 square metres.

Non-operational (commercial) assets have a GIA of 97,770 square metres

We do not hold a complete record of all the floor areas.

The assets had a net book value total of £1,002,821,398 (excluding council housing) as at 01/04/2022.  
Asset valuations are audited annually and were last audited year end 2022.

As part of the Budget process, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Investment Programme requires capital receipts from the disposal of surplus or under-performing assets and deploys the proceeds from the sale of capital assets in the following way:

- for reinvestment in the capital investment programme as follows:
  - Asset Management Fund £1.0m pa
  - IT&D Fund £1.0m pa
  - Strategic investment Fund £0.250m pa
- for modernisation of council services including using the government's 'capital receipt flexibilities' that allows revenue costs to be capitalised and funded from capital receipts where this generates efficiencies. The Modernisation Fund was £15.5m over 4 years from 20/21 to 23/24 (average £3.875m pa)
- for repayment of debt or for investment, for example, to offset any loss of rental income in the revenue budget.

This provides Property & Design with a capital receipt target to achieve of approximately £6m per annum.

Property & Design with Finance have identified possible capital receipts from surplus properties/ sites, poor performing assets and prioritised these into a capital receipt programme over 4-5 years.

The identified capital receipts have been estimated and the document is monitored quarterly by Finance and Property & Design. The document is commercially sensitive and contains confidential financial information that cannot be disclosed publicly as this would constitute as anti-competitive behaviour that would give the marketplace a competitive advantage.

## **6. Councillor Fishleigh**

### **Tackling Inequality**

Please would you tell me what were the three largest expenditures from the £13.2 million allocated to tackling inequality in the 2022/3 budget and what are the measurements of success for the three.

### **Reply from Councillor Osborne / Powell, Joint Chairs of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee**

Thank you for your question.

The Housing Revenue Account Budget & Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Report to Housing Committee Appendix 4 on 18<sup>th</sup> January includes proposals for £13.755m investment over 4 years for Tackling Inequality. This includes:

- £2.165m for environmental and communal area improvement work based on resident priorities

- £8.000m for Aids and Adaptations to homes to enable vulnerable residents to continue to live independently in their homes
- £3.590m for conversions and extensions to tenants' homes to reduce overcrowding

Improving council housing and community involvement is a key priority in our Housing Committee work plan. Our investment in Tackling Inequality aligns to this priority. The bulk of this budget allows for investment in supporting council tenants and residents to live independently in their homes for longer through housing adaptations, including conversions and extensions to tenants' homes. Enabling our tenants and residents to remain safely in their home supports Health and Social Care priorities around reducing hospital admissions, admissions into residential care and enabling hospital discharge. In addition, investment in conversions and extensions promotes best use of our council housing stock through alleviating overcrowding. Our investment in environmental and community improvement work aligns to resident engagement priorities and improving our neighbourhoods in response to resident feedback and in anticipation of new duties under the Social Housing Regulation Bill.

We monitor progress against these priorities in our quarterly 'Housing Committee Workplan progress update and Housing Performance Report' to Housing Area Panels and Housing Committee. This reports on key performance indicators, including in relation to assessment and completion of housing adaptations to council homes. We also monitor budget spend through our TBM process, reported to Policy & Resources Committee. In addition, our measures of success for environmental and communal area improvement incorporates feedback via resident satisfaction surveys, including our STAR survey, the next one being due in September 2023. All Housing Committee papers are publicly available.

## **7. Councillor Fishleigh**

### **2021/2/3 Council Tax:**

How much money raised from Council Tax was allocated into the capital budget and how much as revenue in 2021-2 and 2022-3?

### **Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council**

Council Tax revenues are not hypothecated in this way and are effectively a general, unringfenced funding source. Council Tax funds less than 20% of total gross expenditure and around one third of the council's gross General Fund budget. Other sources of funding for the General Fund budget are government grants, fees & charges, and retained Business Rates.

The cost of financing the council's capital budget has also fallen by around £2.4m in 2022/23 due to a combination of very low borrowing rates towards the end of the previous year and a slow-down of capital expenditure due to a range of factors, including supply chain challenges.

## **8. Councillor Theobald**

### **Withdean Park (puppy park):**

Withdean Park in the Patcham & Hollingbury ward has a popular fenced off puppy park which is enjoyed by many dog walkers and their pets. Residents have requested that the Council install a water fountain in the park in time for summer, so do owners have access to water to keep their pets (and themselves) hydrated. Will the Council consider installing such a facility?

**Reply from Councillor Davis / Hills, Joint Chairs of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thanks for your question.

I am really pleased that so many residents enjoy this fenced off area for puppy walking in Hollingbury Park. Whilst it would be lovely to be able to install water fountains in parks the council does not have sufficient budget to enable this at this time. However, we would encourage residents to bring sufficient water with them in reusable bottles from home both for themselves and their pets when exercising.

**9. Councillor Brown**

**Road sweeping in the Goldstone Valley:**

The amount of longstanding litter and weeds/leaves on the pavements and roads of the Goldstone Valley, litter in the outer tree fringes of Hove Park and on the grass verge along King George VI Avenue has increased noticeably. The litter is also particularly noticeable on steep inclines such as Queen Victoria Avenue and the Droveaway by the Engineerium.

Is there any known hinderance or barrier to the regular and effective cleaning of roads and pavements on an incline? Residents have noticed council roadsweeper vehicles are not clearing the steeper roads.

Residents would like to know how often council operatives sweep all the roads and pavements in these areas in the Goldstone Valley and how many council employees are allocated to street cleaning duties across Hove, and particularly to Hove Park Ward.

**Reply from Councillor Davis / Hills, Joint Chairs of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

The weather has a significant impact on how resources are deployed. Over the autumn, Street Cleansing has had to prioritise leafing in areas where there is a high risk of flooding, which has reduced resources in other areas. During the cold weather, roads that have been gritted won't be swept because of removing the grit from the roads. There have also been vehicle issues with mechanical sweepers, which has led to a reduction in sweeping. However, the area is checked regularly by supervisors who address any issues arising, within available resources. In response to the question on how often council operatives sweep all of the roads and pavements in Goldstone Valley – a mobile crew visits the shops twice a week to change the litter bins and check the area. Across the Hove Park Ward area there is 1 mobile crew who focus on bins, shop fronts, and hot

spot areas including leafing and weeding. There are also 2 barrow operatives.

#### **10. Councillor Bagaeen**

##### **Council work patterns:**

Many companies have now brought staff back to the office, after finding that employees were working longer hours yet productivity had not improved. These firms found that employees were finding no distinction between home and work and many employees were working in silos, with an impact on productivity and mental health of employees.

Brighton and Hove City Council has been the slowest in the country to reopen and return to normal after the pandemic. The Greens and Labour have voted to require mandatory face mask wearing at the Council to continue indefinitely – even when Councillors are speaking – and also voted to move to a model of permanent remote service provision, which is excluding many people from receiving council services.

Can the Leader of the Council advise how many FTE staff are employed by the Council in office desk-based based roles and what proportion are currently working from home.

##### **Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council**

Contrary to your assertions, recent research and benchmarking shows that Brighton and Hove City Council is in line with many other authorities and organisations in developing a model of hybrid working following the pandemic. While it is a model that presents new challenges, it also presents opportunities for staff in light of changing circumstances, that leads to welfare and access improvements. Whatever the narrative that ministers peddle, it is also worth remembering that COVID-19 and its impacts, both medical and social, continue to have a detrimental impact on residents across Brighton & Hove.

City council customer services have been open throughout the pandemic, and where needed for service delivery, staff have been attending workplaces throughout the pandemic as normal. While there is face to face and telephone support available for those that need it, more customers became used to contacting the city council through digital means during Covid-19. This is more cost effective and therefore significant improvements have been able to be made to the digital offer e.g. 54% of city council customers pre-Covid renewed their parking permit online which has now increased to 99.8%.

Some council teams are able to work in a hybrid way where work can be carried out from many locations, including from home. The organisation is supporting the development of a hybrid model. This work is being done alongside workstreams to ensure we optimise the use of our buildings, members have oversight of this through the Asset Management Board. The hybrid model will ensure that all staff attend the office as needed by the requirements of their particular and, of course, to ensure team cohesion, development and connection with colleagues. 4,041 employees have laptops and can work flexibly, which could include working from home from time to time. A small number of staff in the Revenues and



Benefits team fulfil the full duties of their roles remotely, but all other employees are required to attend their city council workplace as necessary.

#### **11. Councillor McNair**

##### **Pay rises:**

It was recently reported in the press that the Council has said it is facing a budget shortfall because of a pay rise it has administered to staff.

The recent budget strategy report showed that the Council currently funds 3508.7 FTE staff positions across its service budgets.

Can the leader provide further details of the cost impact to the budget of the recent pay rise it provided to council officers and the impact on the Budget position?

##### **Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council**

The city council does not determine Local Government pay awards as it is part of the national negotiating body, the National Joint Council. This is composed of the Local Government Association, which represents Local Authority employers, and Trades Unions, representing their members.

The NJC is long-established and recognised as a meaningful and effective vehicle for these discussions; without it, the city council would spend time and resources negotiating pay and key parts of terms and conditions.

The NJC proposed a flat cash pay award of £1,925, pro rata to hours worked, for the 2022/23 year which was accepted by a majority of the Trades Unions and was confirmed in November 2022. The award also included an uplift to allowances of 4.04% and one additional annual leave day (excluding JNC staff – Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Assistant Directors).

For General Fund council services in Brighton & Hove City Council, the award equated to an increase in pay costs of approximately 6.3% or £9.08 million. The cost is higher than the FTE would suggest because it also applies to in-house agency staff and includes the uplift of allowances and the cost of an additional leave day.

The pay award was negotiated in the context of CPI hitting 10.1% in September last year and RPI rising to a high of 14.2% in October 2022.

#### **12. Councillor Lewry**

##### **Benfield Barn:**

Benfield Barn in my ward of Hangleton & Knoll ward has been placed on the Historic England's 'at risk' register.

The Assessment by Heritage England states that Benfield Barn's Condition is 'Very Bad' and has a trend of 'deteriorating'.

Local residents are very concerned about Benfield Barn and are not happy with how it is being managed. There is upset that the historic flint wall has not been repaired after it was partially knocked down

Could the Chair please advise whether the Council has any plans to repair Benfield Barn to get it off the Heritage England at-risk register, including whether it has applied for any grants? Specifically, could an

update be provided on the works needed to repair the flint wall which have now been going on too long.

Supporting information:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/1452>

### **Reply from Councillor Osborne / Powell, Joint Chairs of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee**

Benfield Barn itself is not on the Historic England 'heritage at risk' register as that register only contains grade I and grade II\* listed buildings and the barn is grade II.

However, the Benfield Barn Conservation Area is on the 'at risk' register. It was originally placed on the register due to the overgrown condition of the barn and the land to the rear of the barn and the dilapidated state of the single storey outhouses to the south end. Please see link to the Benfield Barn Conservation Area on the council's website ;  
[Benfield Barn Conservation Area \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](http://brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Following the council's intervention, the majority of the overgrowth was cleared from both the barn itself and the land. This clearance did reveal the dilapidated and deteriorating state of the various flint walls and structures on the land to the rear of the barn however the main barn itself is not in obviously poor condition and is not at risk.

The Conservation Area remains at risk due to the condition of the flint walls and structures. These are included in the 225 year lease for Benfield Valley granted in 1992. The liability to maintain and protect these sits with the long lessee and we are working with our lessee to ensure these structures are repaired.

We are advised by the long lessee that there has been a delayed start to the repairs due to the weather and difficulty in sourcing materials which are specialist. We are further advised that machinery is being delivered to site the second week of February so that work can commence to clear the area and commence repair works. The long lessee hopes to complete the repairs by the end of April.

### **13. Councillor Nemeth**

Portslade Station

The Council has failed to spend its funding for Gateway welcome signage at Brighton and Hove train stations that was agreed to at the City Budget in 2021-2.

In a previous update in October 2022, the Chair advised:

At Brighton Station a location was established for the installation but despite lengthy negotiation, Network Rail did not give permission to proceed. At Hove Station, the Network Rail were not able to offer permission in the station itself for an installation and at Portslade Station the budget provided is too small to commission something significant. Options are being explored.

Can the Chair provide an update on the Gateway signage project? Given that the Council has been unable to find a suitable location at Brighton or Hove Stations, would the Chair consider transferring the funds to Portslade station to make that project viable?

Supporting Information

Refer to Pages 23-25: <https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/b37445/Addendum%20%20-%20Written%20Questions%2020th-Oct-2022%2016.30%20Council.pdf?T=9>

### **Reply from Councillor Osborne / Powell, Joint Chairs of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee**

As was stated at the Council meeting in October 2022, officers investigated the potential to install large gateway signage and artwork at several key entry points in the City's including three main gateway train stations at Brighton, Hove and Portslade. At Brighton Station a location was established for the installation but despite lengthy negotiation, Network Rail did not give permission to proceed. At Hove Station, the Network Rail were not able to offer permission in the station itself for an installation and at Portslade Station the budget provided was too small to commission something significant. There are currently no plans to transfer the budget.

#### **14. Councillor Barnett**

##### **Civic events for the elderly:**

Cllr Lewry and I organised three events for the elderly in Hangleton & Knoll to bring people together after the pandemic, including for the Queen's Jubilee in June, for Christmas and New Year.

We raised donations from the generous local business community to help hold them.

Those attending said how important they felt it was to be socialising and meeting in person again after the pandemic.

I was disappointed to read the Council does not plan to hold any civic events for the Coronation in May, an occasion which we know many elderly people would want to watch. Nothing was done by the Council for the Jubilee.

The Council has events staff but is not organising events for the elderly.

Can the Chair advise how many staff are employed in the Council's events team and how much is spent on events annually in the budget?

### **Reply from Councillor Osborne / Powell, Joint Chairs of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee**

The Outdoor Events team is comprised of 3 members of staff that are a net contributor to the Council, so they generate more income than they cost. Under the current outdoor events strategy (2019-2024) the events team function as a receiving team for external event producers. The events team currently oversee a programme of over 100 significant outdoor events and support many other smaller community events throughout the year. The team also oversee wedding bookings for the

bandstand, advertising spaces on Brighton seafront and over 300 filming events in the city annually. Some civic events are also commissioned and delivered by the team including the Women's EURO 2023 Fan Zone, the proclamation of the New Monarch and the annual Remembrance Day services. These bring local people together as participants or spectators through programming events that appeal to the whole community, including visitors and residents of all ages. Examples include community events such as Burning the Clocks, the Children's Parade and our support for Brighton Fringe and Festival.

With regards to the Coronation. We are planning, at this stage, to make the same provision for street parties as the Platinum Jubilee where we will collate applications and waive fees for the road closures. There are currently no plans for civic events and no budget allocated for any programme.

## **15. Councillor Cllr Simson**

### **Rottingdean Air Quality Management Area project group:**

When is the next meeting of the Rottingdean Air Quality Management Area project group scheduled to be held?

This Group needs to meet to consider the vote of the Rottingdean Parish Council to remove the Rottingdean Planter which is causing traffic congestion in the East of the City.

The Council said on 7 December that 'We will convene a meeting of this group in the new year' and that 'If the group agrees with the parish council's vote we will take the matter to a future environment, transport and sustainability committee'.

However as yet no such meeting has been arranged. Residents believe that the Administration is delaying holding the meeting as it does not want the planter to be removed and wishes the matter to be deferred until after the local elections.

Can you assure residents otherwise?

### **Reply from Councillor Davis / Hills, Joint Chairs of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

The Rottingdean High Street AQMA project group met on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2023. The meeting agreed to recommend the temporary removal of the planter while monitoring on the impact on air quality continues over a 12-month period and the impact of traffic diversions on Steyning Road is assessed.

Monitoring costs for temporary traffic counters on Steyning Road before and after the planter is removed are being sought.

Legal advice is also being sought on whether a temporary removal (rather than a permanent one) still means the ETS committee's approval is needed. If this is the case, it is not practical to bring a report to the March committee because of officer workloads, so an agenda item will be required for the first committee after the election. While these questions are being resolved, the planter will remain in place.

## **16. Councillor Bell**

### **Toilet refurbishment programmes:**

In 2022 Brighton and Hove City Council put out tenders for contracts worth approximately £2 million for toilet refurbishment in schools. Can the Leader of the Council provide more details on this expenditure programme, including what the works will entail, along with its total budget.

Why have so many toilets required sudden refurbishment at the same point in time?

### **Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council**

The education planned programme for 2022 / 23 as agreed at CYPS committee and P&R committee in March 2022 included £665k for refurbishment of school toilets. Specific schools and blocks are shown below.

#### **Toilets**

Bevendean Primary	Boys toilet refurbishment and adaptation 0/067
Carden Primary	Boys Toilet Refurbishment 0/002 and 0/002b
Carden Primary	Girls Toilet Refurbishment 0/004 and 0/004b
Mile Oak Primary	Nursery toilets alteration and refurbishment
Patcham Infant	Refurbish boys and girls toilets x 2 - 0/009, 0/010, 0/020 and 0/021
Saltdean	Refurbish toilets; Block 4, Ground floor girls and boys toilets 0/003 and 0/004.
St Luke's Stanford Infant	Refurbish top floor boys and girls toilets
Stanford Infant	Toilet Refurbishment Boys 1st Floor
Stanford Infant	Toilet Refurbishment Girls 1st Floor

The city council works with the schools on the form of the refurbished toilets with some separate boys' and girls' toilets and some cubicles that can be used by any pupil. This is a collaborative approach, on a case-by-case basis agreed with the schools dependent on their specific requirements and each schools' views are taken into consideration when drawing up the plans and specification for the works.

We undertake toilet refurbishments each year as part of the planned programme, the programme is based on priority need.

For information the draft planned programme in respect of school toilet projects for the 2023/24 financial year is £650k and includes the following schools and specific toilet blocks. This is currently a draft programme which will be considered by CYPS committee on 6 March 2023 and P&R on 16 March 2023.

Bevendean Primary	Refurbish Year 2 boys and girls toilets 1/003 & 1/004
Carden Primary	Boys and Girls Toilet Refurbishment 1/008 and 1/008A
Downs View School	Toilet refurbishments 0/052, 0/056, 0/057 (Phase 1)
Goldstone Primary	Staff WC Refurbishment (0/004 and 0/005)
Longhill High	Girls Toilet Refurbishment Room A061 (Basement Block 1)
Longhill High	Boys toilet refurbishment A064 (Basement Block 1)
Roundabout Nursery	Refurbishment of toddlers toilets

#### 17. **Councillor Meadows**

##### **Denton Drive:**

The pavements in Denton Drive are in a bad state. They have been inspected I believe. Can the chair advise when they will be repaired?

##### **Reply from Councillor Davis / Hills, Joint Chairs of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Denton Drive is regularly inspected for Safety Defects, following the last Inspection on the 12<sup>th</sup> September '22 there was one defect recorded and repaired. There have since been two ad hoc reports about defects at investigation level, which were inspected on 21<sup>st</sup> December '22 with a repair date of 18<sup>th</sup> January. These were caused by the recent freezing weather. It is helpful for Councillors and members of the public to report their concerns to the Council's Highway Maintenance Team who will inspect and repair any serious defects.

#### 18. **Councillor Wilkinson**

How many council run 'changing places' toilets are there across Brighton and Hove and does the Co-Chair share my ambition to see further 'changing places' toilets added to the city's toilet facilities for the vulnerable members of our society?

##### **Reply from Councillor Davis / Hills, Joint Chairs of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

I do share your ambition for further Changing Places Toilets in the city and am really proud of the investment we are making to improve facilities for residents and visitors who need to use these facilities, along with their carers.

There are currently two Changing Places Toilets situated in public toilets which are operational and run by the council at The Colonnade and Shelter Hall on the seafront. There is also another council-run Changing Places Toilet in The Brighton Centre.

Through the public toilet refurbishment programme, two further Changing Places Facilities are being introduced at Daltons (one in the men's and one in the women's) which will be available in the summer months.

**19. Councillor Wilkinson**

In recognizing that public toilets are an essential part of our city's infrastructure, how many council run public toilets are there in the Kemp Town area of the city and does the chair share my view that there is inadequate public toilet provision for the many vulnerable and older residents living in the Eastern Road and Kemp Town areas seeking to use the businesses and services in the St James Street area?

**Reply from Councillor Davis / Hills, Joint Chairs of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

There are no public toilets on St James' Street, although there are numerous sites stationed along Madeira Drive. These include The Colonnade, Peter Pans Play Area, Daltons, and Black Rock. As outlined in the budget papers yesterday we plan to hire a business manager whose responsibilities will include working with local traders to ensure more toilets are available to residents and visitors.

**20. Councillor Wilkinson**

A large number of residents have expressed concern about the diversions put in place due to the Western Road improvement scheme. Buses and other vehicles are being diverted along Upper North Street and Montpelier Terrace.

- a. What specific monitoring of traffic levels has occurred on these roads to date in respect to the scheme and if so, at which locations?
- b. Is there any indication to date that congestion is occurring in any part of the city as a result of the scheme?
- c. Is there any monitoring occurring regarding the impact of the diversion of buses and other heavy vehicles on the houses on these roads?
- d. Is air quality monitoring specific to the scheme taking place on Montpelier Terrace and Upper North Street and if so, how often that data will be reviewed in respect of safety levels. Please specify any roads on which this information is held and how residents can access such information?

**Reply from Councillor Davis / Hills, Joint Chairs of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you Cllr Wilkinson for the question. Firstly, I'd like to say we're sorry for any inconvenience caused during the construction work. However, it has unfortunately been unavoidable because of the nature of Western Road with high numbers of pedestrians and buses as well as the need to maintain access to businesses and provide safe working areas for staff. The implementation process for construction schemes is a matter delegated to officers who need to consider the council's responsibilities

under its Network Management Duty. However, I know it is not a decision that has been taken easily and a number of different options have been considered.

On your questions about monitoring, there is no specific requirement to do this for the diversion route; however, officers have installed equipment to monitor traffic volumes, speed and nitrogen dioxide. This is in response to concerns raised by some residents prior to the diversion coming in with the purpose being to monitor compliance.

Two speed monitoring devices have been installed and these are located on Montpelier Terrace and Upper North Street with one for each direction.

Additional nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes have been located on Montpelier Road, Upper North Street and at the junction with Regent Hill. These don't give us live readings but results will be reported in the annual status reports on air quality, scheduled for July.

Finally on your point about congestion, I am pleased to say that there is no evidence to date that the scheme is causing additional congestion issues. Indeed, initial data from bus operators indicates they have not been affected by delays as a result of the diversion. I would also note that no general traffic has been diverted as other vehicles can only use Western Road in the opposite direction, which has been kept open.

I realise the work will mean some disruption for a while, but this scheme will have long term benefits for our residents, businesses and local economy for years to come.