

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 43

Subject: Written questions from Councillors

Date of meeting: 19 October 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 McNair

Tennis Courts

It has been good to see some tennis courts renovated by Lawn Tennis Association and the UK Government. We understand the importance of a centralised booking system to help with collecting fees to maintain the courts. But with the new pricing structure, it could cost £15.40 for a parent and their child to play tennis for an hour. If it's before 5 on a weekday it would cost £12.70. This is very expensive, and unlikely to help enable children to become future tennis players. Will the council consider providing free slots for juniors across the city, for example Monday to Friday 3-4.30pm and Saturday-Sunday 9-10.30 and 1-2.30, and during school holidays: 9am to 11am and 1-3pm?

Reply from Councillor – Robins, Chair of Culture, Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Economic Development Committee

2. Councillor McNair

Flooding Scape project

The Scape project in Carden Avenue has been working for a number of months. Some residents report less flooding; others report problems with the dangerous height of the grass on exiting their drives onto Carden Avenue. The amount of grass in the basins appears to stop water falling into the basins. Has there been a review of the Scape Project, and what improvements will be made?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

3. Councillor Meadows

Peace Gardens

The Peace Gardens have had benches damaged recently, graffiti and a fallen column. The crazy paving is broken in many places. The paving around the edge of the sunken garden has been broken for years and is a trip hazard. Benches have not been replaced. This is a war memorial. When will improvements be made to the gardens to ensure they look well-kept.

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of Culture, Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Economic Development Committee

4. Councillor Bagaeen

Housing

The council gave on 4 October the developer of the Dairy site on the Drove way in Westdene & Hove Park a get out clause from delivering what was then the only affordable homes being delivered in the ward. No Registered Provider could be found for these and the council did not want to take them on. What is the council doing to facilitate the delivery of affordable and social housing in our ward? And what is the council doing to support Registered Providers to enable them to take over the small number of properties coming through s106 obligations? After all, an obligation is not an obligation if this council will always allow developers to take the easy way out. This council should be on the side of residents, not developers.

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee

5. Councillor McNair

Carden Hill

Carden Hill is a major artery, and bus route. When will it be resurfaced?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

6. Councillor Meadows

Brangwyn Estate

The Brangwyn Estate has not been cleared of weeds. The lanterns at the entrance to Brangwyn Way are in a poor state. And the newly planted trees planted to camouflage the 5G mast are all dead. When will the area be de-weeded? And when will the trees be replaced?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

7. Councillor Lyons

Beach huts

On what basis does the council claim to be able to require beach hut owners to enter into a new licence? The licence on which they hold hut 96 dates from the 1980's and does not, it is believed, contain any right of the council to simply require a new form of licence to be entered into, nor a right to terminate the licence save in the event of a breach of its terms. If this is correct the council cannot demand that beach hut owners enter a new Licence. If this is considered incorrect, could we receive a copy of the Licence that governs the hut and refer to the relevant clauses?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

8. Councillor Theobald

Affordable housing units

Can the Council please advise me on the number and location of affordable housing units that the Council has provided since 2018 with section 106 commuted financial sums from developers who have been unable to provide on site affordable housing.

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee

9. Councillor Theobald

Buildings with flammable cladding

Councils have a duty to investigate suspected category 1 hazards under the Housing Act that may include all buildings with flammable cladding. The LGA is continuing to encourage its members to consider whether any private buildings might benefit from a Joint inspection Team inspection. Has Brighton & Hove City Council inspected all such buildings in the City and if not, how many remain to be inspected and where are they located?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee

10. Councillor Goldsmith

With falling Pupil Admission Numbers across the city, is it likely that the council will have to close schools, and what is the council doing to try and avoid this?

Reply from Councillor Taylor / Helliwell, Joint Chairs of Children, Families & Schools

11. Councillor Goldsmith

What work is the council doing to assess the potential impact of the Department for Education's miscalculation on school funding?

Reply from Councillor Taylor / Helliwell, Joint Chairs of Children, Families & Schools

12. Councillor McLeay

Theobald House is in serious need of repair and residents were assured that major capital investment works were to be undertaken within the 2022/23 financial year. Residents have since been updated that the planned works are being pushed into the next financial year. Could the Chair of the Housing and New Homes Committee share an update as to the reason for this delay and when these residents can expect the works to begin?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee

13. Councillor Hill

Has there been any change to the schedule of major works on Sylvan Hall? Hollybank and Rowan House blocks were scheduled for autumn repairs.

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee

14. Councillor Hill

Labour's 2024-2025 budget process has promised to take a 'more fundamental look at the council's cost base and the affordability of services and capital investments'. What does this more fundamental look mean in practice? For example, how does this affect our procurement processes?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council

15. Councillor Hill

How does the council's recruitment freeze affect jobs that are necessary for the provision of statutory services?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council

16. Councillor Hill

What is the amount of gas oil that has been used per annum to maintain the temperature in the Newhaven incinerator boiler plant and mobile plant for the past 5 years?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

17. Councillor Hill

British Glass have written to Brighton and Hove Council asking them to support the UK circular economy and decarbonisation efforts and sell the glass they collect for recycling to a company which processes the glass for remelt in the UK. Currently the glass is sold to the Days Group who export it and use it for aggregate. British Glass provided Brighton and Hove City Council with a list of UK companies who process glass in the UK. Do the council intend to continue selling to Days Group OR will they support the UK circular economy and keep the glass in the UK by selling to a different company, e.g. Beatson Clark, Enva, Glass Recycling UK, Recresco, Sibelco, URM Group.

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

18. Councillor Pickett

The critical environmental concerns around the dumping of raw sewage in our rivers and seas by water companies continues. Despite being continually fined for illegally discharging sewage into our waters, Southern Water continues to do so. Brighton & Hove residents pay to ensure water is effectively managed and considers Southern Water is not fulfilling its duty to update drainage systems to cope with rainfall that occurs more often, due to global warming. What is the council's plan to ensure that Southern Water fulfils the obligations of a water company to provide clean and safe water, and to remove sewage and road run off in a way that does not cause environmental damage?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

19. Councillor Pickett

With regard to Enterprise Point, Melbourne Street, the current property guardians have been told that despite the owners being refused planning permission, they intend to demolish the building and evict the huge number of guardians within 30 days. What actions is the council taking to support residents and can we be advised what steps can be taken to ask the property owners to delay the timeframe for this eviction? Has the council made any direct representations to Kosy Homes?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee

20. Councillor Earthey

Some Labour councillors have claimed that BHCC has disengaged from ESCC's A259 Corridor Study to the extent that major congestion points to the east of the city have been under-represented and poorly evidenced in the analysis conducted to date, including the Rottingdean traffic lights. What

steps is BHCC taking to re-engage with the Study to ensure that there is a fully co-ordinated approach with ESCC to identify A259 improvements, and to ensure that important funding opportunities to improve our critical pinch-points are not missed?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

21. Councillor Earthey

What new locations have been identified for a park and ride?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

22. Councillor Earthey

Based on the engagement promises made by BHCC Labour Leadership at the recent launch of the Brighton Climate:Change Think Tank, what specific, practical steps is the Leadership taking to engage with local resident expertise to create novel designs for local carbon sinks, and insetting and offsetting schemes, which are so vital to the city's Carbon Neutral 2030 strategy?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee