

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The following questions have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answer which will be included in an addendum that will be circulated at the meeting:

(1) Councillor: Druitt

What measures are being taken in advance of the summer to maintain safety in the city centre, most especially in and around Regency Square, Clarence Sq., Bedford Sq., Norfolk Sq., St Nicholas' green spaces, Duke Street and Western Terrace which suffer high levels of anti-social behaviour, drug taking and even public defecation for much of the year but most especially during the summer, bearing in mind neither the council nor the police have been able to do very much about the problems in previous years?

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

(2) Councillor Druitt

The independent traders in the city centre are much of what gives Brighton & Hove its vibe and its appeal for visitors. Yet many continue to struggle with high rents, unfair business rates, and antisocial behaviour on their doorsteps. Many of the issues (e.g. rents and rates) are not ones the council has direct control over, but the council does have control over other things such as street cleanliness, graffiti, levels of anti-social behaviour and the way it collects business rates and enforces arrears. What is the council doing to support businesses struggling to stay afloat, especially those in areas that have faced declining trade such as Preston Street and Duke Street?

Reply from Councillor Robins – Chair of the Tourism, Development & Culture Committee

(3) Councillor Janio

At the last Full Council, I asked why the Labour Administration did not attempt to remove Hangleton Bottom from the Waste and Mineral Sites Plan. Her answer informed me who the other partners were in the plan, when it was signed and what period it covers. It did not answer the question. I am not permitted to ask the same question again, but could Cllr Mitchell explain any investigations that the Labour Administration has taken to identify other sites that could be safeguarded for use as a Waste Transfer Site in preference to Hangleton Bottom – an area that is more suitable for mixed use Development.

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

(4) Councillor West

The Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan offers a considerable opportunity to support an increase in active travel with all the clear benefits that will bring, including: reducing carbon footprint, traffic congestion, air pollution and the cost of travel, while also improving health and road safety.

It's very clear in the DfT guidance that the LCWIP should be a collaborative project with stakeholders fully engaged in the process, and not merely seen as consultees to a consultant led plan.

The first stage of the LCWIP process is to agree on governance. That should rightly be done by a steering group comprising members, including our cross-party cycle champions, and at least two co-optees representing local cycling and walking organisations. A key initial task for this group should be to develop with officers the LCWIP brief for consultants. It should also be tasked with informing spending priorities for additional LTP funds and development of a multi-million-pound capital bid to the LEP for active travel funding.

Would Councillor Mitchell agree that such an inclusive approach, ensuring the strengths of our active travel community are properly embraced in shaping and delivering investment in active travel, is the best and right approach; and will Councillor Mitchell therefore take the opportunity to initiate this?

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

(5) Councillor Gibson

If all projected (received up till April 1st, 2023) and usable RTB receipts (already received) were utilised to build new council homes at the 30% rate allowed by government what would the estimated total spend be? If this total spend produced new council homes at an average cost of £220,000 a home how many new council homes would this yield?

Reply from Councillor Hill, Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

(6) Councillor Gibson

What is the total number of homes sold under the RTB so far this financial year (as of 20th March 2019)? And adding this total for this year so far to RTB sales in previous years since 1st April 2015, how many homes had been sold as of the 20th March (between 1st April 2015 and 20th March 2019)?

Reply from Councillor Hill, Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

(7) Councillor Gibson

Can you confirm that the table which collates rough sleeper count and estimate data below is correct and given that the table that rough sleeper estimates in

the same year have been consistently higher than counts undertaken in the same year was it wise to switch from estimates to counts in November 2018 (in an election year)?

Rough sleeper counts and estimates

Year	10/11	2011	12/13	2013	2014	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Rough sleeper count	14	36	43	50	41	?	?	?	64 (Nov)
Rough sleeper estimate		76		90	132	78	144	178	?
% of estimate that is a count in the same year		47%		56%	31%				

Reply from Councillor Hill, Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

(8) Councillor Gibson

The much heralded, very welcome and desperately needed additional 10 (government funded) Housing First Placement support packages are due to start 3 days after full council on Monday 1st of April. Can you confirm that 10 additional properties have been identified along with 10 (“revolving door”) homeless clients are lined up to go and ready to move in as soon as the money is available?

Reply from Councillor Hill, Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

(9) Councillor Gibson

If 10 Housing First placements are not yet ready to move into accommodation, how many properties and people have been identified so far?

Reply from Councillor Hill, Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

(10) Councillor Gibson

Given that BHCC has had many months to make arrangements for Housing first placements and given that they will make an important contribution to helping 10 individuals and easing pressure on supported accommodation at a time when the closure of the West Pier project is putting services under strain, how do you think the MHCLG will react if we do not have the placements up and running on the 1st of April? Will failure to do this on schedule damage our credibility with MHCLG and jeopardise our prospects for securing further funding?

Reply from Councillor Hill, Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

(11) Councillor Gibson

Given Housing and New Homes Committee's desire to redress the under allocation of properties to the council interest queue and given that over the period since the commencement of the allocations plan the queue has been under allocated, can this under allocation be redressed by making Housing First allocations with immediate effect in conjunction with an associated support package?

Reply from Councillor Hill, Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

(12) Councillor Gibson

Given that the very welcome all year night shelter is funded to open from 1st April 2019, can you confirm that a building has been obtained for use? And if it is not ready, when you plan for the shelter to open?

Reply from Councillor Daniel, Chair of the Neighbourhoods, Inclusion, Communities & Equalities Committee

(13) Councillor Gibson

National figures on how well councils used their borrowing opportunities (under the cap) reveal that on 1st April 2018, Brighton and Hove Council were in the top quarter of councils failing to spend the borrowing available under the cap and that neighbouring councils of Lewes, Eastbourne, Adur and Wealden had all used proportionately more of the borrowing available. Having not made the most of borrowing opportunities so far and given the housing crisis in our city, (given we now have a new chair of housing) will you undertake to use the 31m + unused borrowing under the previous cap and more to ramp up the council house building programme so that it achieves its potential in the future?

Reply from Councillor Hill, Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

(14) Councillor Deane

How many prosecutions against perpetrators of tagging and graffiti have there been during the past year, two years and five years?

Reply from Councillor Hill, Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee