

Labour Councillors Update December 2017

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Housing

- We held a well-attended Rent Smart conference at the end of November <http://rentsmartbrightonhove.org/rent-smart-conference-29nov17/>
- The new winter night shelter for rough sleepers opened in the Brighton Centre on Sunday 10th December and is running well <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/night-shelter-rough-sleepers-open>
- Councillors supported the Galvanise community-led campaign activities before Christmas, which included outreach work with rough sleepers to survey their circumstances and their needs
- The city's Severe Weather Emergency shelter (SWEP) has been operating regularly over Christmas and New Year due to the poor weather conditions
- Cllr Morgan and Cllr Mitchell were able to visit some of the 57 new council flats at Kite Place in East Brighton, with the first tenants getting keys in the New Year. You can read about new council homes in the pipeline here <http://bit.ly/2CCVcwA>
- Councillors supported the BHT Big Christmas Street Collection on 16th December

Council finances

There was a provisional Local Government Finance Settlement just before Christmas that was roundly condemned, because there was nothing for children's or adult social care, nothing for pay, and nothing to reverse the damage made by years of cuts to baseline local government funding. So Tory austerity is continuing, and so are the incredibly challenging budget problems for all councils including ours. Between 2011 and 2020 the council will have lost around £100m baseline government funding. Our final budget proposals for 2018/19 will come forward in February,

and in them we will do what we can to mitigate the impact of Tory austerity, and protect residents, services and jobs. **See the Budget focus section later on in the newsletter.**

Other areas

- The most recent City Tracker results came out and despite funding reductions trust in the council is slightly up, and with more people agreeing we are making best use of the funding we have <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/survey-shows-residents-view-council-improving>
- We achieved the crowdfunding target for the Madeira Terraces <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/i-want-praise-you-i-should>
- We supported the White Ribbon campaign's 16 days of action which ran from November 25th <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/city-men-called-help-end-violence-against-women-and-girls>
- Councillors attended the World Aids Day Vigil at the Old Steine on 1st December
- The new Carers Hub was launched <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/making-life-easier-city%E2%80%99s-carers>
- The second phase of the #streetsahead campaign was held <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/sea-streets-%E2%80%93-campaigning-keep-our-city-clean>
- A report will come to Neighbourhoods committee in January about work going ahead to tackle the County Lines method of drug dealing. This is a real growing concern in the city, and includes exploitation of vulnerable people including young people <http://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2017/11/01/bright>

[on-home-raided-as-part-of-huge-coordinated-county-lines-drug-bust/](#)

- A consultation began on the two week autumn half-term <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/give-us-your-views-two-week-autumn-half-term>

December council meeting

- There were a number of petitions and deputations at council. Petitions were about the proposed secondary school temporary catchment changes, and there was also a deputation about Benfield Primary and the proposal to reduce the school's admission numbers (PAN). The report about school catchments and primary PANs will go to Children's Committee on 15th January, but we are now recommending no changes to the secondary school catchments and only 3 out of 5 primary PAN changes
- There was also a petition about affordable housing in developments, which is an issue that many members

have views on and would like to know whether more can be done to increase the number of affordable units in developments. We were already looking into the issue of adopting an Open Book approach, and this is coming to committee in January You can read more on this here <http://bit.ly/2At49Tw>

- We brought forward three Notices of Motion at council. Two were joint with the Green Group – calling for the removal of the Freedom of the City from Aung San Suu Kyi proposed by Cllr Warren Morgan, and the other about updating regulation of taxis and private hire vehicles proposed by Cllr Jackie O'Quinn (Chair of our Licensing Committee).
- The third Notice of Motion was joint with the Conservatives calling for better support for care leavers in the city, and was proposed by Cllr Tom Bewick (Westbourne ward), who is himself a care leaver, and who is involved in setting up a Care Leavers Trust for the city.

Focus on: the budget

There are many challenges facing Labour councils across the country, caused by reducing government funding and increasing inequality driven by Tory austerity policies. We have the extra challenge of not having a majority on the council, and so not only do we have problems getting Labour policies through, but we also have problems getting our budget through. Labour councillors like all councillors have a responsibility to set a legal budget, and Labour's rule on this was agreed at conference. . If we fail to set a budget, Tory ministers will step in, and this could undermine our power to plan the budget the best way we can in line with our values..

In November every year our draft budget proposals for the following financial year are published – you can find all the detail of the proposals here <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/budget-proposals-201819>. Between now and 8th February Policy, Resources and Growth Committee meeting (PRG) we will continue to work on these proposals, and listen to what residents and other stakeholders want to say. There may also be further announcements from the government that affect what funding we will have available next year. At February PRG our final proposals will go forward for discussion, and after that they will go to Full Council on 22nd February.

It is very difficult to meet the financial challenges we face, and still deliver on our values of getting the basics right, protecting the most vulnerable and growing an economy that works for everyone.

Our budget proposals for next year are based on dozens of meetings between our Committee Chairs and the Lead Directors for their areas. These meetings look at the services that are provided, the pressures on the services, and what that means in terms of delivering the services the following year. There is then a series of meetings where everyone looks through the proposals and considers whether there are any new ways of maintaining services despite financial pressures.

For more detail on our budget proposals please see our feature on it here: <http://docdro.id/7lrXjN2>.

Current consultations

To get involved with consultations or see what is being consulted on there is a consultation portal (<http://consult.brighton-hove.gov.uk/portal>). Below is a list of consultations open at the moment.

Consultation	End Date
Stanmer Woodland Management Plan	30 th January
Autumn 2017 half term consultation	31 st January
HIV stigma survey	17 th February
Wedding location consultation	1 st February

Council decisions

Please see the committee grid for details of recent and upcoming council committee meetings together with the deadlines for public participation and main agenda items and decisions: <http://docdro.id/QGnvdFq>

The role of a councillor

Are you thinking about standing as a council in the 2019 local elections? Here is some information about the role of a councillor: <http://docdro.id/vw7Fpx3>. We are always happy to answer questions and meet up with members to provide more information about being a councillor.

A week in the life of... Tracey Hill, councillor for Hollingdean & Stanmer, lead member for private rented housing. Week of December 4th.

"Monday December 4th in the afternoon I went to a briefing about the proposed new Community Infrastructure Levy, a new form of developer contribution that might replace the Section 106 process for new planning developments. I also attended a short meeting on ward issues, and in the evening it was our regular weekly Labour Group meeting. Tuesday morning I had a regular officer meeting in my role as lead councillor for private rented housing. In the evening I had a quarterly councillors' surgery in Coldean followed by the December meeting of the Coldean Residents Association, where my colleague Caroline Penn and I were delighted to be given flowers as a thank you from residents for our support.

On Wednesday I went to an agenda-setting meeting for the North Area panel, part of our system for involving council tenants and leaseholders in decision-making. These area panels are under review and we are experimenting with spending more time on the agendas to customise them for each area. The feedback from tenants is positive and we have managed to increase participation and discussion in the meeting. In the evening I dropped in at the AGM of Hollingdean Development Trust where I am a trustee, followed by attending the Brighton Pavilion AGM. On Thursday I had a meeting with a ward resident in the morning, and a meeting with colleagues in the afternoon. In the evening went along to the excellent fundraiser at the Old Market.

On Friday of this week I just had a short meeting in the evening with a group who have taken on the running of the Hollingdean News, a local newsletter, which I am helping on with advertising and distribution. I am self-employed, so have to fit paid work around my councillor responsibilities, but being able to work at home makes that easier."

Getting in touch

If you want to get in touch with Labour Group then please email info@brightonhovelabour.com, unless it is something that is ward-related in which case please contact your ward councillors. Contact details for all councillors are here <https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/mqMemberIndex.aspx?FN=PARTY>, including contact details for committee chairs. If wards or branches want speakers on a specific topic please let us know, as councillors are happy to come along to meetings.
