

Labour Councillors' update May 2018

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Update from Cllr Dan Yates, leader of Brighton & Hove City Council

Dear member

It's been around one month since I took over the role as Labour Leader of the City Council, and I have to say that firstly I would like to thank all those members, councillors and friends who have welcomed me and supported that first month.

It's been a really steep learning curve – trying to work out how to pull the levers of power! But also making sure that we don't let the Tories or the Greens get away with political grandstanding without being called out for it...

Just one example to give you a flavour:

The Fake News:

Greens from the city centre trying to blame me as a ward councillor for The Bridge Adult Learning Centre being closed.

The Facts:

The Bridge was a charity organisation who found that at the end of national funding programmes they no longer had the finances to continue running. Before, during and after the closure, local Labour Councillors worked to try to secure additional support, helped identify spaces for the stranded support programmes and worked with partners to lobby for additional funding. We do this behind the scenes because we are working for solutions – not an opportunity to self-publicise. All the Greens did was issue a press release.....

As a Party we have got to all work together to challenge this opportunistic approach to politics – it isn't genuinely designed to solve the very real problems that communities and residents are feeling as result of Tory imposed austerity. All it is designed to achieve is local election votes in the wards the Green Party are defending. That is why Green Party councillors sometimes back the Tories on the council to thwart Labour's plans. And the Conservative group either defend the Conservative government, or pretend austerity is nothing to do with them. Meanwhile it is the Labour group of councillors who have had to fight to keep the trust of residents, many of whom are suffering really badly under austerity, and to defend the essential services they rely on, all against a background of £100m cuts in our government funding.

Despite these challenges, your Labour council has refused to give up, because we know our Labour values are making a difference. We are ambitious for the city, and we want the opportunity to continue promoting our city, and to show residents what more can be achieved in every community if they continue to put their trust in Labour - and support us to get a majority on the council as well.

So in May 2019 there is only one choice. Getting as many residents as possible to vote Labour and seeing a full Labour Majority on the city council. We know a Labour Council can continue to protect residents and services but only for so long. The challenge as soon as Theresa May gives us the chance is to maximise the number of Labour MPs elected, and to see a Labour Government in power, Labour priorities in action and Jeremy Corbyn opening the front door at Number 10.

Let's get candidates selected and campaigns in full swing! *Daniel Yates*

General update

- Annual Council on May 17th confirmed Dan Yates as the new Leader of the Council and also the Labour team on the council for the coming year. See some details here <http://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2018/05/04/labour-reshuffle-sees-greater-focus-on-community-safety-and-sustainability-with-new-social-value-role-for-newest-councillor/>
- We have successfully bid for £500k more funding to help rough sleepers <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/%C2%A3500k-boost-city%E2%80%99s-rough-sleeper-services>. There has also been a look back to evaluate the impact of the Winter Night Shelter <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/winter-night-shelter-%E2%80%93-a-look-back-and-forward>
- The city has been shortlisted to become one of Channel 4's proposed new creative hubs <https://www.brightonandhoveindependent.co.uk/news/business/channel-4-relocation-an-excellent-opportunity-for-brighton-1-8517526>
- We have also been successful in achieving £300k new funding to ensure wider availability of electric vehicle charging points: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/funding-boost-electric-vehicles>
- We have been improving the planning register, to provide new and easier options for residents to look for, track and make comments on planning applications: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/new-planning-register-helping-improve-customer-service>.
- We are consulting on options for protecting the Royal Pavilion Garden <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/help-us-protect-and-enhance-our-royal-pavilion-garden>
- 24 lifeguards are now supervising the beaches: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/brighton-hoves-lifeguards-get-set-summer>

[release/brighton-hoves-lifeguards-get-set-summer](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/brighton-hoves-lifeguards-get-set-summer). We had extra resources on hand over the late May Bank Holiday to cope with the impact of visitor numbers on the seafront and around the city <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/huge-clean-after-one-busiest-bank-holidays-ever> and we were pleased to get two Blue Flag Awards and a Seaside Award for the city's beaches <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/oh-we-do-be-beside-award-winning-seaside>

- On Royal Wedding and Cup Final day (May 19th) we welcomed around 25 members to Queens Park Ward for our Super Saturday campaign day, including Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP and many councillors. We spoke to hundreds of residents.



- The i360 has been in the news. A council fact check is here <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/i360-fact-check> and a media report from committee last week is here <https://www.brightonandhoveindependent.co.uk/news/postponed-council-puts-off-decision-on-i360-payments-1-8534571/>
- Funding has been found to improve some city playgrounds before the summer holidays <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/press-release/work-starts-improve-city-playgrounds>

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.

The Old Steine to Palace Pier survey is to gather views on this section of the Valley Gardens project – see focus article below.

Consultation	End Date
Business rate relief – community & voluntary sector	19 th June
Revaluation rate relief 2018-2021	19 th June
Old Steine to Palace Pier	29 th June
Royal Pavilion Estate	29 th June
HIV Stigma Survey	1 st July

Focus on: Valley Gardens – essential information

You may have read about the Valley Gardens scheme which includes major works to the streets and public space between St Peter's Church and the Palace Pier. In brief, the scheme will involve:

- Putting both north-bound and south-bound general traffic onto a two-way road on the eastern side of the gardens.
- Putting buses and taxis into a public transport corridor on the west side of the gardens. This will be a quieter road, forming less of a barrier between the park and the city centre. The west side would also have access for local traffic to the North Laine part of the city centre.
- Improving the gardens, including planting of around 150 trees.
- Making the space more attractive to use, eg removal of the road separating St Peter's Church from Victoria Gardens north to create a new public square in front of St Peter's. Further south opposite the Richmond pub there will be a second public plaza which could be used for temporary events.
- Better access for walking and cycling with new cycle lanes, footpaths and crossings. To keep traffic moving, roads will be resurfaced and 'smart' traffic signals installed which can detect and respond to queuing. Current complex road layouts and junctions would be simplified, reducing vehicle lane-changing and improving road safety.

The Valley Gardens Scheme was championed by the previous Green-led Council. Despite Labour opposition, the scheme was pushed through in the last months of the Green-led administration by Greens and Tories. The funding bid was successful, with £8m being secured from the Coast to Capital local economic partnership. Since 2015, considerable work has been done scrutinising the proposals which we inherited, including repeating some of the traffic modelling in order to optimise the impact of the scheme.

There is a consultation running at the moment asking for views on how this area works at the moment and what people want to see changed. See the Consultations section below: Old Steine to Palace Pier (open until 29th June).

Signs have gone up along Valley Gardens itself and more information is on the council's website: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/parking-and-travel/travel-transport-and-road-safety/a-vision-valley-gardens> We're expecting works to begin at the end of summer at the earliest, and more communications are being planned to keep people informed.

Council decisions

Please see the committee grid for details of recent council committee meetings together with the deadlines for public participation and main agenda items and decisions: <http://docdro.id/QGnvdFq> May is effectively the end of the Council year, and the May Full Council meeting is a ceremonial meeting to elect the new mayor. This grid will be updated soon with future meetings reflecting councillors' new committee responsibilities.

The role of a councillor

Have you applied to stand as a councillor in the 2019 local elections? Here is some information about the role of a councillor: <http://docdro.id/vw7Fpx3>.

NB this information has been updated to include information about the time commitment, support for councillors, the councillor's allowance and links to other documents.

We are always happy to answer questions and meet up with members to provide more information about serving on the council.

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/mgMemberIndex.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.