

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT & SUSTAINABILITY CABINET MEMBERS MEETING

2.00pm 17 FEBRUARY 2012

BANQUETING ROOM, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Davey (Cabinet Member)

Also in attendance: Councillor G Theobald (Opposition Spokesperson) and Mitchell (Opposition Spokesperson)

Other Members present: Councillors Deane, Duncan, MacCafferty, Shanks, Wealls

PART ONE

78. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

78(a) Declarations of Interests

78.1 There were none.

78(b) Exclusion of Press and Public

78.2 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Cabinet Member considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100I(1) of the Act).

78.3 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting.

79. CABINET MEMBERS' COMMUNICATIONS

79.1 Councillor Davey informed the meeting that a report detailing the objections to the East Street Area Traffic Regulation Order was scheduled to be presented to the meeting. However, the objections had subsequently been withdrawn and accordingly, the report had also been withdrawn.

80. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

80.1 **RESOLVED** – That all items be reserved for discussion.

81. PETITIONS

81(i) Petition – No Parking Charge Hikes for local businesses

81.1 Councillor Davey stated that he had received a Petition, Public Question and Deputation from Mr Raggio. For clarity, he would provide one response that would cover the points raised in each. Councillor Davey informed Mr Raggio that, as with all Public Questions, he would be entitled to ask a supplementary question which would be provided at the end of his response.

81.2 Mr Elliot Raggio presented a petition signed by 1422 people objecting to the increase in the annual cost of business parking permits and trader parking.

81.3 Councillor Davey provided the following response:

‘Thank you Mr Raggio for your Deputation at Full Council and your petition and question here today.

Firstly on the general point of the impact on the local economy:

The economy in this city is reliant on traders, small businesses, and in particular the tourism and the retail sector. We are a busy tourist destination and it is of no benefit to local traders, B & B's and hoteliers or the economy in general to have people sitting in a gridlocked traffic jam in the city centre – something which happens all too often. Using parking management is one way of helping to tackle congestion and keeping the city moving by encouraging alternatives such as parking outside the city centre, or using public transport.

We are fortunate that the city has seen an increase in visitor numbers from 7.8m to 8.6m between 2005 and 2009. At the same time the number of cars entering the city centre has reduced.

Measures we have put in place in this review to support the economy include:

Keeping prices in the edge of centre car parks such as Norton Road, Regency square, London Road and Trafalgar Street - lower than in the city centre. This will encourage drivers to park there rather than driving right into the city centre. This will bring the double benefit of increasing footfall in these areas and a boost to local trade whilst at the same time reducing city centre congestion

We are also proposing to introduce an overnight rate aimed at visitors staying at hotels and B & Bs, to provide them with secure off-street parking at a discounted rate to support the economy

In terms of traders and business permits, we have listened and revised our proposals from £750 to £600 per annum for traders and from £400 to £300 for business permits. These rates compare very favourably with comparable authorities.

We are also taking every opportunity to promote the quarterly payment options which will help small businesses with their cash flow.

I do not believe that charging traders less than £2 per day to park anywhere in the city, will strangle the city's economy. We do know that nearly 400 traders on the waiting list

for a permit will benefit from these proposals as we abolish the waiting list and the rationing that has hampered new and expanding businesses for so long. All traders will now have equal access to the benefit that these permits bring.

This is a bold step that no previous administration has ever undertaken. So, yes common sense has prevailed’.

81.4 In his supplementary question, Mr Raggio replied that he did not find the £600 price of business and trader permits to be acceptable. He also relayed his disapproval with the suggestion that businesses and traders that could not afford a yearly permit could buy a quarterly permit. If these were bought over the course of a year, they would cost more money than a yearly permit.

81.5 Councillor Davey replied that there was no specific question for him to answer in Mr Raggio’s statement however; he believed that a quarterly permit was useful not only as a cash flow option but also for those businesses and traders who did not require a full annual permit.

81.6 **RESOLVED** – That the petition be noted.

82. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

82.1 Councillor Davey considered a Public Question from Mr Elliot Raggio concerning increases to business and trader parking permits (for response see Item 81(i)).

82.2 Mr Raggio asked the following question:

“The proposal will force businesses to increase their prices and rates, this will no doubt strangle businesses and put an unnecessary added burden onto them, households and residents of Brighton and Hove.

The proposal will have a negative knock on effect across our local economy.

Starting with traders your policy will hit domestic customers, small businesses, landlords and tenants; four parties that are imperative to our cities economy.

Freezing the prices and opening up the waiting list has added benefits to the local economy, reducing carbon footprints and raising extra revenue for the council. Has the Administrations common sense finally prevailed?”

82.3 For response see Item 81(i)).

83. DEPUTATIONS

83.1 Councillor Davey considered a deputation from Mr Elliot Raggio concerning increases to business and trader parking permits (for response see Item 81(i)).

83.2 **RESOLVED** – That the deputation be noted.

84. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

84.1 There were none.

85. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

85.1 There were none.

86. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

86.1 There were none.

87. PARKING TARIFFS CONSULTATION

87.1 Councillor Davey considered a report of the Strategic Director, Place that addressed comments and objections to the draft Traffic Regulation Orders for the changes in Parking Tariffs throughout Brighton & Hove.

87.2 Introducing the report, Councillor Davey explained that the council's transport strategy which was agreed by all parties - aimed to reduce the negative impacts of vehicles in the city such as air pollution, congestion and delays to journeys. In doing so it endeavoured to create a more pleasant, sustainable and healthy city.

Councillor Davey stressed that health was an important issue in the proposals adding that there was an urgent need to reduce the impact of traffic because in some areas of the city air pollution caused by Nitrogen Dioxide consistently exceeded the legal limit. This was not an issue that could be disregarded.

Councillor Davey added that encouraging walking, cycling, use of the excellent bus network, trains, coaches, taxis or the powered two wheelers, was imperative. Analysis had shown that bus and cycle usage was increasing and since 2001 there had been fewer cars entering the city but more needed to be done and, for that reason, a review of the city's parking tariffs was necessary.

Councillor Davey highlighted that there was consultation on these proposals between November and January 2011-12. During that period officers deliberately sought and were successful in gaining extensive coverage in the media to generate as much informed discussion as possible. He and the relevant Officers had met with residents and business groups as well as with individual traders when requested to do so.

Councillor Davey explained that responses to the discussions were listened to and in response several changes were made to the original proposals which were detailed in the report.

Councillor Davey explained that the proposal to waive fees for parking suspensions for community groups to hold approved events was still included in the report. This was significant support for groups such as the Kemptown Carnival that would otherwise have to pay significant fees for the suspension of bays. He was sure this would help the group and many more across the city.

Councillor Davey highlighted that it was important to remember that any surplus income from the parking tariffs was reinvested into areas such as providing free bus travel for older people, supporting bus routes, investment in schemes such as the Brighton Station Gateway, improving cycling facilities, making the environment safer for walking and extending travel plans to schools – all of these help to further tackle congestion, air pollution and make our city more sustainable, healthier and a more pleasant place to be.

- 87.3 The Head of City Infrastructure explained that as was clear from the report, there were two additional changes proposed not itemised in the recommendations, namely that there be no increase at the Black Rock Car Park and that the enforcement hours of the King Alfred Car Park change from 9am-5pm to 9am to 8pm and not the 9am-11pm as originally advertised. The Head of City Infrastructure added that the TRO had been advertised in the normal way. In addition, the Highways team had extensively used social media and sent the TRO to the Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership, Federation of Traders and the Brighton & Hove Chamber of Commerce. There had also been widespread coverage in the national and local press. The objections to the TRO, the responses to them and the subsequent amendments to the TRO were detailed within the report.
- 87.4 Councillor Theobald thanked Mr Raggio for his involvement in this issue which he believed had made clear that the proposals were an ideological attempt to force cars off the road and a deliberate attack on businesses. He suggested that many businesses and traders would not be able to afford the annual charge up front which would result in them paying for quarterly tariffs at increased cost. Councillor Theobald stated that he expected many more complaints to be made when the proposals came into force on April 1. Councillor Theobald also expressed his confusion that such a policy would be implemented when the Citywide Parking Review was in process. In addition, he felt that Brighton and Hove would establish a reputation as a 'rip-off' town which would deter tourists. Councillor Theobald also believed that the consultation process had been a pretence that had led to token concessions. In sum, he believed the dramatic increases were unreasonable and unfair in a time of economic downturn.
- 87.5 Councillor Mitchell stated that the proposals were harsh measures in a time of economic recession. Councillor Mitchell expressed her confusion as to why no alternative measures had been provided such as a Park and Ride scheme. She believed if the proposals were accepted, it would lead to a significant decrease in tourism revenue. Councillor Mitchell praised the work of Mr Raggio in highlighting the effect these measures would have upon sole traders who worked for a living and did not make significant profit. It was her opinion that the proposed increase in parking tariffs would result in the cost being passed to consumers at a time of economic hardship.
- In addition, Councillor Mitchell believed it disingenuous for comparisons to be made with the tariff prices in London boroughs as there was a notable discrepancy in incomes between the two areas.
- Councillor Mitchell explained that she believed the proposals had not been thought through sufficiently. She believed there should have been more dialogue undertaken with businesses and traders at the beginning of the process, that there should be a staged increase to tariff prices to lessen the impact of the rises and that the Council's £3 million budgetary underspend for 2011/12 be used to facilitate this. She urged Councillor Davey to re-think the proposals.
- 87.6 Councillor Davey thanked Councillor Theobald and Councillor Mitchell for their comments. Councillor Davey observed that no suggestions on a location for a Park and Ride facility had been forthcoming. He noted that the parking charges for the edge of the city centre including the Regency area were remaining the same. Councillor Davey believed this would in fact benefit businesses on the outskirts of the city via increased footfall. Councillor Davey stated that congestion and air pollution did not

support businesses particularly the tourism economy on which the city depended. The proposals would mean that visitors and shoppers would not be queuing in traffic for extensive periods which would certainly be of benefit to the economy.

87.7 **RESOLVED-** That, having taken account of all duly made representations and objections, the Cabinet Member approves as advertised:

- The Brighton & Hove (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2008 Amendment Order No.* 20** (Car Parks) (ref.TRO-9a-2011)
- The Brighton & Hove Various Controlled Parking Zones Consolidation Order 2008 Amendment Order No.* 20** (ref.TRO-9b-2011)
- The Brighton & Hove Seafront (Various Restrictions) Consolidation order 2008 Amendment Order No.* 20** (ref.TRO-9c-2011)
- The Brighton & Hove (Waiting & Loading/Unloading Restrictions and Parking Places) Consolidation Order 2008 Amendment Order No.* 20** (areas outside of Controlled parking zones) (ref.TRO-9d-2011)

Subject to the following amendments:

- To include the far eastern stretch of Madeira Drive in the low tariff zone for the full calendar year.
- That the new cost of Traders Permits be changed to £600 per annum (or £160 per quarter).
- That the new cost of Business Permits will be reduced to £300 per annum (or £85 per quarter).
- That the tariffs for Black Street off street car park are frozen
- That the enforcement hours of the King Alfred Car Park change from 9am-5pm to 9am to 8pm and not 9am-11pm as originally advertised

The meeting concluded at 2.26pm

Signed

Cabinet Member

Dated this

day of

