

**ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY
COMMITTEE MEETING**

2012

Agenda Item 20a (i)

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Travellers Horsdean Site – Extract from the Council Meeting held on the 19 July 2012

Date of Meeting: 2012

Report of: Strategic Director: Resources

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Wards Affected: All

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

4.30pm 19th July 2012

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Councillors Randall (Chair), Meadows (Deputy Chair), Barnett, Bennett, Bowden, Brown, Buckley, Carden, Cobb, Cox, Davey, Deane, Duncan, Farrow, Fitch, Gilbey, Hamilton, Hawtree, Hyde, Janio, Jarrett, Jones, Kennedy, A Kitcat, J Kitcat, Lepper, Littman, Mac Cafferty, Marsh, Mears, Mitchell, Morgan, A Norman, K Norman, Peltzer Dunn, Phillips, Pidgeon, Pissaridou, Powell, Robins, Rufus, Shanks, Simson, Smith, Summers, Sykes, C Theobald, G Theobald, Wakefield, Wealls, Wells and West.

PART ONE

7. (B) TRAVELLERS, HORSDEAN SITE

7.25 The Mayor stated that under the Council's petition scheme, if a petition contained 1,250 or more signatures, it could be debated by the Full Council and such a request had been made in respect of an e-petition concerning Travellers and the proposed Horsdean site.

7.26 The Mayor invited Councillor G. Theobald to present the petition.

7.27 Councillor Theobald thanked the Mayor and stated that a total of 1,611 people had signed the combined paper and e-petition which read as follows:

"We the undersigned, object to Brighton & Hove City Council's plans for a static Traveller site at Horsdean on the South Downs National Park in Patcham."

- 7.28 Councillor G. Theobald stated that the petition was growing by the day and it emphasised the point that residents of Brighton and Hove objected to the proposed static Traveller site at Horsdean, which was also in the National Park. He noted that a transient site already existed and the addition of a permanent site adjacent to this was not appropriate or conducive to social cohesion. He therefore wished to move an amendment to the recommendation which would prevent the establishment of a permanent site within the National Park.
- 7.29 Councillor Peltzer Dunn formally seconded the amendment.
- 7.30 Councillor West stated that there were 23 pitches provided on the transient site and the creation of an adjacent permanent site would lead to an economy of scale. He noted that it was difficult to manage the unauthorised encampments that emerged in the city and having a permanent site should help to reduce the number of occurrences. He also noted that the previous Conservative Administration had recognised the need for a permanent site and secured funding for the provision of a site. He also noted that the recent cross-party scrutiny review on Travellers had recommended the provision of a permanent site. The proposed site would have to meet the relevant planning authority's requirements and a consultation process was taking place and he believed that it was the best option for all concerned.
- 7.31 Councillor C. Theobald stated that she did not feel it was appropriate to have everyone based on site and expressed concern over the possible contamination of the water table. She did not believe that a proper consultation exercise had taken place and was concerned that the existing transient site remained under-occupied even with groups setting up elsewhere as they did not want to pay for the use of the site.
- 7.32 Councillor Jarrett suggested that the best way of managing the unauthorised encampments was to have people on the permanent site and thereby enable better use of the transient site.
- 7.33 Councillor Wakefield welcomed the proposed creation of the permanent site and suggested that it would be regarded as treating Travellers with common decency and respectful of their human rights.
- 7.34 Councillor Jones suggested that the permanent site would enable its own community to be established and for those on the site to then be able to access services etc...
- 7.35 Councillor J. Kitcat stated that he was disappointed to see the petition given that the strategy to provide a permanent site had come from the cross-party scrutiny review. The previous Conservative Administration had left the situation unresolved for four years and the proposed site would meet national standards.
- 7.36 Councillor Hyde stated that the matter was an important issue and noted that there were currently twenty vans parked at Saltdean which was causing residents concern.
- 7.37 Councillor Mitchell stated that the council had a policy to provide a permanent site and the Labour & Co-operative Group had supported Horsdean subject to public consultation. She also noted that the Conservative Administration had secured funding and this was something that the current Government had chosen not to reduce and

therefore she wondered where the Conservative Group would suggest for a permanent site.

- 7.38 Councillor West noted that three sites had been short-listed and that Horsdean had come out as the preferred site and therefore he could not accept the proposed amendment.
- 7.39 The Mayor noted that an amendment had been moved by Councillor G. Theobald and put it to the vote which was lost.
- 7.40 The Mayor then put the recommendation as listed in the report to the vote which was carried.
- 7.41 **RESOLVED:** That the petition be referred to the Environment & Sustainability Committee meeting on the 17th October, 2012 for consideration.

