

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**

**4.30pm 21 JULY 2011**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

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

**PART ONE**

**7. PETITIONS FOR COUNCIL DEBATE**

**7(a) Save The Big Lemon Bus**

- 7.1 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 Save the Big Lemon Bus.
- 7.2 The Mayor invited Ms. J. Chase to present her petition.
- 7.3 Ms. Chase thanked the Mayor and stated that a total of 2,316 people had signed the combined paper and e-petition which read as follows:
- "We the undersigned, petition the council to level the playing field in the local bus industry to ensure smaller groups like The Big Lemon Bus Company are not at a disadvantage."
- 7.4 Ms. Chase stated that she hoped the council could support local businesses which offered a sustainable future and should not be threatened by larger competitors. She believed that action taken by the larger bus company on specific routes where the Big Lemon operated were unfair and should be challenged.
- 7.5 Councillor Davey noted the petition and stated that he had been impressed by the number of signatures that had been obtained. He believed that there should be an open dialogue with all the bus companies and noted that the Office of Fair Trading was looking in to the situation in Brighton and Hove. He hoped that their findings could be

taken on board in due course and stated that he was happy to discuss ways in which the council could help smaller businesses to succeed.

- 7.6 Councillor Pissaridou referred to the report on the matter and stated that she supported the petition that she wished to move an amendment on behalf of the Labour & Co-Operative Group to the report's recommendation, to encourage help for smaller businesses.
- 7.7 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Pissaridou on her maiden speech.
- 7.8 Councillor Farrow formally seconded the amendment.
- 7.9 Councillor Janio stated that he supported the petition and the proposed amendment as any measures that could be used to prevent a monopoly of service provision should be welcomed. He noted that the council had very little influence over the bus company and suggested that new legislation was required to assist with the issue.
- 7.10 Councillor G. Theobald stated that he believed the Big Lemon Bus Company should be supported and welcomed the Cabinet Member's response. As the previous Cabinet Member for Environment had previously written to the Brighton & Hove Bus Company and Competition Commission expressing the need for competition. However, the council had very little influence over such matters other than in preparing tender documents, which he hoped would be made more suitable for smaller businesses to understand.
- 7.11 Councillor Davey welcomed the cross-party support on the issue and stated that he was keen to help wherever it was possible.
- 7.12 The Mayor noted that an amendment had been moved along with the recommendation to refer the petition to the Environment & Sustainability Cabinet Member Meeting and stated that she would put them to the vote.
- 7.13 The Mayor then put the Labour & Co-Operative Group's amendment to the vote, which was carried.
- 7.14 The Mayor then put the substantive recommendations as amended to the vote which were carried.
- 7.15 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the petition be referred to the Environment & Sustainability Cabinet Member Meeting for consideration; and
  - (2) That the council requests the Cabinet Member to consider how to offer help and advice to The Big Lemon Bus operators in the same way that it does for other smaller businesses and social enterprises in the city.

Note: Councillors Kennedy and Wakefield, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item as shareholders of The Big Lemon Bus withdrew from the meeting and took no part in the discussion or decision thereon.