

ENVIRONMENT CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 62(i)

Brighton & Hove City Council

Councillor Brian Oxley

37 Blenheim Court
New Church Road
Hove
BN3 4AJ

Councillor G. Theobald OBE
Cabinet Member for Environment
c/o Tanya Massey (Democratic Services)
King's House
Hove

Date: 6 October 2008

Our Ref: BWO/EB

Your Ref:

Dear Councillor Geoffrey Theobald

I would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss the recent raising of charges for parking permits at the next meeting of the Environment Cabinet meeting on 6 November 2008.

Residents in Westbourne Ward have raised concerns with me by about the recent increases in parking charges.

I fully appreciate that there were clear reasons for raising the charges for the current financial year 2008/09. Not least of which were: (i) the fact that charges had not been reviewed for 10 years; (ii) the need to demonstrate to outside inspectors that the Council is using its charging powers appropriately; (iii) the perennially poor Government grant which has made it increasingly difficult for us to respond to residents requests for more planting, street cleaning and better upkeep of parks. I am grateful that you have agreed to review the time limit on visitor permits but the feedback I am receiving is that residents are not convinced that the scale of recent increases is proportionate. This will no doubt be compounded by the fact that a large number of renewals are about to go out for residents and permits, which have, of course, doubled.

As an Administration, we have always taken the view that people do not pay their taxes in isolation. This is all the more true given the current national economic circumstances where people are experiencing very high levels of inflation for many other essential items of expenditure. Clearly, we did all we could last year, and will do so again this year, to keep council tax increases as low as possible. However, I would ask whether, due to the combination of exceptional circumstances being experienced this year, you would consider a freeze, in real terms, on charges for the financial year 2009/10?

/Cont...

-2-

I would ask the Environment Cabinet Member meeting to look sympathetically at this issue and ask officers to look at what measures could be put in place to help residents.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Oxley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

Councillor Brian Oxley
Westbourne Ward Councillor

Visit my blog pages at www.brighton-hove-councillors.org.uk/BrianOxleyblog