

**ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT &
SUSTAINABILITY CABINET
MEMBER MEETING**

17 February 2012

Agenda Item 83

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Deputation on Parking Charges – Extract from the Council Meeting held on the 26th January 2012		
Date of Meeting:	9 February 2012		
Report of:	Strategic Director: Resources		
Cabinet Member Responsible:	Councillor Davey, Cabinet Member for Transport & Public Realm		
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Wards Affected:	All		

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

**4.30pm 26th January 2012
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Councillors: Meadows (Chair); Wells (Deputy Chair), Barnett, Bennett, Bowden, Brown, Buckley, Carden, Cox, Davey, Deane, Duncan, Farrow, Fitch, Follett, Gilbey, Hamilton, Hawtree, Janio, Jarrett, Jones, Kennedy, J Kitcat, Lepper, Littman, MacCafferty, Marsh, Mears, Mitchell, Morgan, A. Norman, K. Norman, 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

58(A). PARKING CHARGES – DEPUTATION

58.1 The Mayor reported that two deputations had been received from members of the public and invited Mr. Raggio as the spokesperson for the first deputation to come forward and address the council.

58.2 Mr. Raggio thanked the Mayor and stated that:

“These damaging proposals penalise people opting to drive their own vehicles. Traders and businesses that use private motor transport essential to their companies and need should not be victimised and turned into a cash cow. The parking budgets across the board from pay and display machines, permits of all kinds, wavers are to be increased by an alarmingly high percentage. Putting up the price of traders and business permits will not only have a detrimental effect on Brighton and Hove, local businesses are

currently under extreme pressure. The Greens seem to have a lack of knowledge of the local economy and out of touch with local businesses.

The originally proposed prices were so high following the TNT campaign the Greens were advised the prices which are currently over a 70% increase, for hard pressed traders each will have to find an extra £250 a year whilst business permits are an extra £125 a year. As much as we are pleased the Greens have recognised our campaign, reducing the proposed price does not defer away from the alarmingly high increase during a time of economic uncertainty and recovery.

The Green administration believes they have inherited a current system that discriminates against new and start up businesses, so why hasn't the council scrapped the waiting list yet? That doesn't have an association with the massive price hikes. In an attempt to offer traders something in return the Greens have misunderstood the needs of running a business. The waiting list should be scrapped; the current waiting list is worth nearly £150,000 based on the current price. The extra traders who aren't on the list due to being put off by the 2 – 3 year waiting list would be more inclined to come forward and pay £350 this would have been an extremely popular and positive move for the council. Showing support to local economy your judgement was clouded by the greed of the proposed price hike and the sole reason for scrapping the waiting list is to simply maximise the revenue of the proposed price and not to help the traders. What use are the permits without a waiting list if permits cannot be afforded? How can a business benefit from a dramatic price increase of over 70%?

The high parking prices will also result in many companies increasing their prices hence passing the cost onto consumers; the residents of Brighton and Hove. Some businesses that put up prices may well price themselves out of work having a dangerous negative impact onto their business causing cease trading. The knock on effect in terms of jobs and therefore benefit claims is not known but has this been considered?

These are tough times ahead for many homes which will immediately affect businesses. We often get compared to the centre of London, only being 50 miles away, even the Green administration has fallen into this trap, comparing rates to the most expensive boroughs in London. We are not London we are Brighton and Hove. Incomes in Brighton are significantly lower yet the prices we pay to park down here will be matched. Companies will no doubt be forced, under so much pressure, to try and find business and work outside of the city.

The Sunday times reported this last weekend, 'Brighton and Hove have become the 3rd most expensive place to park in the country.' One priority for the council during the recession or recovery should be to support local businesses and help stimulate the local economy. Back in 2010 the council reduced the trader's permit prices to help the local economy during the recession. We urge the council to make a brave, 100% percent u-turn on the trader's permits and business permit proposed prices similar to Westminster council last week. London's Mayor Boris Johnson said 'common sense has prevailed and has described the decision as brave and correct adding that 'it is very important that businesses should not have any extra burdens.'

Westminster council admitted they needed to pay attention to local economy and after doing so quashed their plans of increasing the recent parking prices. I beg the question

to you Ian Davey, are you paying attention? From shops, estate agents, letting agents, independent traders, service companies and one man bands, businesses and it's consumers have expressed deep concerns by signing our TNT online petition, currently with over 600 signatures and we've also collected 500 signatures handwritten.

The Argus, the local paper, have been running an independent online poll, 77% over 1055 votes agree with TNT. We urge the Greens to listen to the local community and it's businesses. The people of Brighton and Hove are currently having to make sacrifices in order to stay in business and to manage their monthly outgoings per home.

The council needs to understand what it takes to run a business, many people are making ends meet putting in extra hours with limited wages, if being drawn at all, just because you own a business doesn't mean automatically mean you have extra money in the bank, far from it. Brighton and Hove's administration, to swallow their pride, admit they have got it wrong, fully reverse their own damaging parking charge hikes before it's too late. In the own words of your campaign, 'fair is worth fighting for' and we promise today the TNT will continue to grow and fight for what is fair."

58.3 Councillor Davey thanked Mr. Raggio for attending the meeting and presenting his deputation and replied,

"One of the points you raised was about the article in the Times which highlighted Brighton and Hove as the third most expensive place to park and what they didn't say is that, that is actually under current prices introduced by the previous Conservative Administration where it is currently £3.20 an hour to park in the old town. There are also many other factors which will be occurring over the next few months imposing new costs or increased costs on non local businesses, including what I understand is to be an increase in business rates from the national Conservative Government so you may wish to address some attention there.

During the consultation we have spoken to businesses and we have listened to the views of people about the proposed changes. In response, I am looking at a reduced rate for Trader and Business permits. Historically the council has restricted the number of trader permits which are issued despite however business friendly previous administrations were. They did not take the measure of eliminating the rationing which has restricted many hundreds of traders from enjoying the same privileges as traders with permits do now. As a result there are 366 traders on a waiting list.

Checking the council's website, ten permits were issued in December so if that rate were to continue it would take 3 years for many of those traders to actually gain that benefit. This puts new businesses at a serious disadvantage as they currently have to wait that length of time before they can purchase a permit. In the mean time many of these traders have to use on street pay and display bays or come down to Hove Town Hall and queue up to apply for a daily waiver costing both time and money. So alongside the new £160 per annum price for a trader permit, we're proposing to remove the restriction on the number of permits issued. This will eliminate the rationing and allow all traders the equal opportunity to have one. At a cost of less than £2 a day to park anywhere in the City, these permits remain good value for money and are much lower than many authorities that often charge a £1000 a year or more.

I would like to take this opportunity to promote the quarter year permit option which will help businesses with their cash flow also, because there will not be a waiting list, traders will now be able to buy permits only if they need them rather than having to buy them to avoid losing the permit all together and go to the bottom of the list. With regard to business permits, these apply in a single zone, it is worth noting that these are not available in the City Centre due to a lack of available space while some areas have a long waiting list and are at or near capacity.

The new proposed £300 per annum for a Business Permit will equate to less than £1 a day, and remains very competitive with other comparable authorities. Some of which don't offer them at all or charge up to £1000 a year."

- 58.4 The Mayor thanked Mr. Raggio for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. She explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to the Cabinet Member Meeting for Environment, Transport & Sustainability for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.