

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 5(a)

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Petition(s)
Date of Meeting: 21 June 2012
Report of: Strategic Director, Resources
Contact Officer: Name: Penny Jennings Tel: 29-1065
E-mail: Penny.jennings@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: Various

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 To receive any petitions presented at Council, any petitions submitted directly to Democratic Services or any e-Petition submitted via the council's website.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.2 That the Committee responds to the petition either by noting it or writing to the petition organiser setting out the Council's views, or where it is considered more appropriate, calls for an officer report on the matter which may give consideration to a range of options, including the following:

- taking the action requested in the petition
- considering the petition at a council meeting
- holding an inquiry into the matter
- undertaking research into the matter
- holding a public meeting
- holding a consultation
- holding a meeting with petitioners
- referring the petition for consideration by the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- calling a referendum

3. PETITIONS

Governing Party Conventions

3. (i) To receive the following e-Petition submitted via the council's website by Tom Coady. The final number of signatures obtained will be advised at the meeting.

"We the undersigned petition the Council to discourage visitors who require excessive security measures. While we welcome anyone of any faith, creed or persuasion to visit our city, we consider the security

measures disproportionate to the actual risks. If the risks are truly in proportion to the quantum and expense of the security operation, it would seem that these conferences are subjecting everyone living or passing by to an unacceptable risk of collateral damage and so should consider holding their conference somewhere remote. Given the restrictions to anyone entering the secured area, it is difficult to see how these visitors are engaging in any form of democratic exchange, not to mention the limited scope for delegates to contribute to the local economy outside the secured zone”

Justification:

In the words of the recent warning letter: “Brighton and Hove City Council to host the Liberal Democrats’ conference at the Brighton Centre between 22 – 26 September.” As the Liberal Democrats are part of the coalition government, there will be a security operation in place for this event for which will be led by Sussex Police. At this time we anticipate the main security measure for this event which will be led by Sussex Police. At this time we anticipate the main security measure for this event will be temporary fencing around the Brighton Centre and the Grand Hotel. The pavement immediately outside these buildings will also be closed to the public. There will be no other access restrictions for residents – either walking or driving. Residential vehicle passes will not be required as they have been in previous years. We would however, be grateful if you would advise us as far as possible in advance if you are planning anything which may involve large vehicles driving in and out of the area.”

What this means in practice is a period of at least a week where:

- *our homes are surrounded by police, private security guards, sniffer dogs and builders creating temporary security fences and barriers.
- *there are unreasonable restrictions placed on the free movement of people and deliveries to their private homes.
- *anyone wishing to enjoy the hotel facilities such as gym membership have to forego their entitlement.
- *anyone who usually uses the car parks has to move their car and not return until the event is over.
- *most local businesses refuse to deliver goods or services, and if they do run a gauntlet of challenges or roadblocks.
- *anyone who happens to walk to or from the area puts themselves at very high risk of intrusive searches under prevention of terrorism powers.

You have more chance of winning first prize in the National Lottery than you have of being killed by a terrorist. On average, each year in the past decade approximately 150 people drown in their own bath in the UK. On average, each year in the past decade approximately eight people are killed in the UK by terrorists. One death is too many, but terrorism is one of the very least likely ways we might die.