

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT & SUSTAINABILITY URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

2.00pm 12 NOVEMBER 2014

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor West (Chair), Councillor Mitchell and G Theobald

PART ONE

1 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1(a) Declarations of substitutes

1.1 There were none.

1(b) Declarations of interest

1.2 There were none.

1(c) Exclusion of press and public

1.3 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the Act”), the Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100(I) of the Act).

1.4 **RESOLVED-** That the press and public not be excluded.

2 CHRISTMAS PARKING AND ROADWORKS SUSPENSION

2.1 The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Environment, Development & Housing that addressed the known and potential impacts of free parking for ‘Small Business Saturday’ on 6 December and the three Sunday’s ahead of Christmas (7th, 14th and 21st December) in the Norton Road, London Road, Regency Square, High Street and Trafalgar Street car parks. The report had been prepared and an urgency sub-committee convened to comply with a resolution taken at Full Council on 23 October 2014 to consider the matter.

2.2 On behalf of the Green Group, the Chair formally moved a motion to add a new recommendation 2.2 as shown in bold italics below:

2.2 That income generated from the Car Parks set out at paragraph 1.2 of the report on 6th, 7th, 14th and 21st December 2014 will be assessed and the equivalent value will be used to fund additional expenditure on road safety schemes from the Parking revenue budget.

2.3 Introducing the motion, the Chair explained that it was intended to divert the estimated loss of £64,000 to the Road Safety budget in order to provide extra money to prioritise road safety work. The Chair stated that the report was clear that when the same scheme had been implemented the year before, there had been no clear benefits. The Chair explained that Norton Road car park had continued to be empty, that queues for Trafalgar Street car park had begun earlier than usual and that occupancy of the Laines and Churchill Square car parks where free parking had not been introduced had remained the same despite the proposal. The Chair added that evidence was clear that higher parking turnover increased visitor numbers and therefore was positive for local businesses and it was extremely important to continue that at what was a highly pressurised time of year. The Chair stated that the motion would ring-fence money for a good cause which in his view was a much preferable option that increasing congestion in the city.

2.4 On behalf of the Labour & Co-operative Group, Councillor Mitchell formally moved a motion to amend recommendation 2.1 as shown in bold italics below:

2.1 That the Committee approve Option 1 as set out in the report

2.5 Introducing the motion, Councillor Mitchell stated that she felt the Green Group amendment was a cynical political ploy as the administration could divert money to the Road Safety Team at any time. Councillor Mitchell stated that when the same scheme had been approved the previous year, it had been met with warnings that it would be a significant burden on the council's budget and would lead to huge congestion in the city. Councillor Mitchell said that in reality, there had been no evidence of increased congestion and the financial impact was significantly reduced from initial estimates. Councillor Mitchell noted that the report suggested that the council would suffer a "loss of reputation" should they proceed with free parking in the period identified. Councillor Mitchell disputed this claim adding that she felt the city already had a reputation as anti-car and anti-business and it would be good of the council to give something back to traders, residents and visitors through the proposed measures. Councillor Mitchell noted that many other council's including Bury St Edmunds and Guilford were offering similar measures and that this authority should do likewise.

2.6 Councillor Theobald noted that he had proposed the Notice of Motion at Full Council and was disappointed that he had been called last to speak at this meeting. Councillor Theobald expressed his disappointment that there was clear majority support from Members for the Notice of Motion yet the report recommendations went against that will and led to an unacceptable situation whereby an amendment had to be moved to enact free parking measures. Councillor Theobald stated that the reports repeated the same arguments as the previous year and was based upon an obscure EU report that was a number of years old. Councillor Theobald added that there had been no materialisation

of the warning of significant financial impact or congestion problems last year and he did not expect any on this occasion. Councillor Theobald supplemented that in the previous year, on and off street parking measures had brought in £338,000 more than estimated and that £64,000 was negligible in comparison to the benefits. Furthermore, Brighton & Hove had a very poor reputation on parking and these measures would be a small way in which to address that image.

- 2.7 The Chair disagreed that the proposals would be beneficial for residents as 40% currently did not own a car. The Chair noted that CIVITAS had identified Brighton & Hove as a leading authority for sustainable transport which was in direct conflict with the proposals for free parking.
- 2.8 The Chair then put the Green Group motion to the vote that failed.
- 2.9 The Chair then put the Labour & Co-operative motion to the vote which passed.
- 2.10 The Chair then put the recommendations, as amended, to the vote which was approved.
- 2.11 **RESOLVED-**
- 1) That the Committee approve Option 1 as set out in the report.
 - 2) That the Committee note that an embargo of works on the Brighton & Hove network during the period of 01 December to 02 January 2015 inclusive was instructed by the city's Traffic Manager on 14th October 2014.

The meeting concluded at 2.20pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of