

Mr Alex Bailey
Acting Chief Executive
Brighton & Hove City Council

24th September 2009

Request for call-in of Environment Cabinet Member's decision 24th September 2009. Cityparks Downland Management

Dear Mr Bailey,

I would like you to consider my request for a Call-in to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the decision taken by the Cabinet Member for the Environment in relation to agenda item 43, Cityparks Downland Management.

My reasons for this request are as follows;

The report that was before the Cabinet Member did not accord with the statement made by the council's Countryside Manager at the June 22nd meeting of the Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee as recorded in the minutes of that meeting at point 4.6;

"The Countryside Manager welcomed the opportunity to thank volunteers for their hard work and said that issues raised by the increase in costs of cutting and composting sites, together with opportunities for increasing grazing of many sites along with continued mowing of others would be addressed in due course by the proposed draft grazing plan to be considered by the Cabinet Member."

The report considered and decided on by the Cabinet Member on 24th September did not contain any information relating to the cutting and composting of sites or any details about plans for the continued mowing of areas not to be grazed.

There was no proper consultation in relation to this report with local conservation and wildlife groups who state they had been promised prior sight of the report for discussion at three separate meetings they had attended. The Wildlife Advisory Group, one of the council's key advisory bodies, was not consulted.

The report does not acknowledge or make any reference to the letter sent by the Chair of the E&CSOSC and put on the agenda of the

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Environment CMM 30th July containing a request for an urgent review of the Downland mowing policy on a site by site basis that was supposed to be incorporated in the report.

Finally, I would emphasise that the council relies on the help of the voluntary efforts of the 'Friends of' groups and other local conservation and wildlife advisory bodies to conserve and enhance the chalk grasslands surrounding the city and a Call-in of this decision would enable their voices to properly be heard as they should have been initially. It would also enable the information to be given in relation to proposed mowing schedules that is currently missing.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Gill Mitchell
Labour Led for Environment
Leader of the Labour Group