

Geoff Raw – Chief Executive
Brighton & Hove City Council

23rd February 2020

Dear Geoff

I am submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee (ETS) meeting of 17th March 2020.

Since July 2019 I have been seeking answers to questions in respect to BTN Bikeshare. I have raised a number of questions at ETS all of which have been answered “with a response to follow” or “it will be in the report”.

Today items 86 and 87 are being presented by the Administration to Committee of which fail to answer the questions previously raised. I therefore reintroduce the questions for which I would be grateful to receive a comprehensive answer.

1. Tariffs to use the bikes were increased in August 2019. The Administration gave reasons such as the ability to reinvest the revenue citing that the charges were less expensive or comparable with other city’s (that it seems are now closing their bikeshare schemes). The confidential briefing dated 25th July 2019 provides entirely different reasons for the need to raise the tariffs. Will the Chair please disclose those reasons?
2. Has Hourbike paid all debts due to the council. If not, please could you provide the detail and reasons?
3. The council ordered and paid for electric ready bikes. During the contract the supplier was acquired by Uber who subsequently would not supply the electric conversion kits. The council has now received e-ready bikes that cannot be electrified but, in the process paid circa £30k more than had standard bikes been purchased. Please could the Chair confirm what action is being taken to either force Uber to supply the conversion kits the council has paid for or recover the overpaid £30k.
4. It is clear (and reinforced in the report) that the original business case was flawed. Costs were under-estimated and revenue over-stated. The scheme relies on sponsorship to supplement revenue from customers. The ability for the scheme to succeed also appears to rely on subsidies and grants to acquire capital infrastructure without borrowing costs. Any further decision should be based on a revised business case taking account of actual data

established over the last two years. Please could the Chair request a revised business case to support the procurement options in item 86.

5. Please could the Chair explain why the council condones the use of older diesel vehicles to collect and redistribute (and service) the bikes throughout the city when the premise of the bikeshare scheme is to encourage a healthier lifestyle and tackle climate change.

Yours sincerely,
Cllr. Lee Wares