

## **Council – Thursday 17th October 2024**

### **Notice of Motion:**

#### **Urgent action to support seafront businesses (removal of 18:00 to 21:00 Parking Charges in Zone 1A during the low season)**

The previous Labour, Independent, and Liberal Democrat coalition introduced 18:00 to 21:00 parking charges in Zone 1A, for the municipal year 2023/4 onwards.

Evening parking charges present a real threat to the viability of our City's businesses, and a personal cost for their workers. One of the first actions of the Conservative administration that took over in May 2023 was to remove these extended charging times, as they were proving detrimental to the local economy.

Sadly, the same parties forced through a budget amendment in February 2024 to not only reintroduce the 18:00 to 21:00 parking charges, but also to increase car parking charges to £3 per hour on the seafront at the same time.

This means that residents wishing to make the most of our nighttime economy to: visit the seafront, see the fireworks or go to the theatre (once the too small Cliffs Pavilion car park is full) pay nearly £10 to park – even more if they wish to make a day of their visit to Southend. A premium fee just to support our local businesses.

These charges have also proved detrimental to local businesses in Zone 1A, who have reported a significant down-turn in trade during these new charging times compared to last year when they were not in force. They advise that they are now either closing much earlier than before, or not opening at all on some days.

These charges are one of the highest all day/long stay parking charges for any coastal resort in the UK, and are putting people off visiting our great City.

Brighton & Hove City Council, now under Labour control, have recognised the significant damage that high parking charges have had on their local economy. They have confirmed Brighton has seen a significant downturn in visitor numbers to the area, resulting in a financial impact to local businesses, workers and families.

#### **Therefore, Southend-on-Sea City Council resolves to:**

1. Note Brighton & Hove City Council's Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking and Public Realm statement that "High car park prices were deterring some people from coming into the city...".
2. Recognise that charging one of highest coastal all-day long stay parking charges in the UK, is having a detrimental impact on the economy and local jobs in Southend.
3. Take urgent action to safeguard our local economy and protect local jobs within the leisure, retail and hospitably industries by immediately removing the highly damaging 18:00 to 21:00 Zone 1A parking charges during the 'low season', ahead of making permanent arrangements in the forthcoming budget.
4. Accept the 'low season', for the purposes of parking charges across the city, is the period during which the UK is on Greenwich Mean Time.

Proposed: Cllr K Buck

Seconded: Cllr J McMahon