

THE TORY POLICY GULF

WHAT THEY SAY NATIONALLY....



... WHAT THEY DO LOCALLY

**From the Green Group of Councillors
Brighton & Hove City Council
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*Published and promoted by David Jonas on behalf of Caroline Lucas, and Nigel Tart
on behalf of Ian Davey and Ben Duncan, all of 39-41 Surrey St, Brighton.*

In the June 2007 Local Elections, the Conservatives took control of Brighton & Hove City Council.

After more than a decade in the political wilderness, the Tories won 26 seats, to the Green's 12, Labour's 13 and the Lib Dems' 2 and 1 Independent seat (a former Tory who sits with them)

Although the delicate balance of power has since been re-drawn – the Green's took a seat from the Tories in a Hove by-election in 2009 – the Tories have had almost 3 years to pursue their political priorities.

This report details some of the most obvious cases of Tory action on the ground undermining Tory proclamations from on high – the Tory Policy Gulf.

- **WOMEN**

http://www.conservatives.com/Policy/Where_we_stand/Women.aspx

The Tories want to improve the lot of women in the workplace.

In March 2009, a meeting of Full Council resolved to sign up to the Fawcett Charter which seeks to challenge the objectification of women at work (<http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=752>) - <http://bit.ly/d5llty>.

This decision was overturned by the minority Tory Cabinet in April 2009 (http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/4324271.Brighton_and_Hove_council_rejects_strip_club_charter/).

- **DEMOCRACY**

http://www.conservatives.com/Policy/Where_we_stand/~/_media/Files/Draft%20Manifesto/FixingBrokenPoliticsPartOne.ashx

David Cameron says he wants to 'cut the democratic deficit'

When local Tory Cllr Paul Lainchbury earned the nickname 'missing' because of his poor attendance record – he missed every council committee meeting for a year - the Tory administration stood firm in the face of calls for him to resign. Only after the case appeared several weeks running in *Private Eye*, and Green Cllrs called on the Mayor to take action, was he allowed to leave and a by-election held – which the Greens won.

(http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/4356847.Conservatives_deny_by_election_will_take_place_in_Brighton_and_Hove/)

- **CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY**

http://www.conservatives.com/Policy/Where_we_stand/Climate_Change_and_Energy.aspx

David Cameron has a vision of creating a decentralised energy revolution by introducing a system of feed-in tariffs to “encourage micro-generation of electricity”.

As one of the city’s largest consumers of energy, Brighton & Hove Council is well-placed to lead by example in spearheading a micro-generation revolution... Or it would be if Tory councillors hadn’t voted to refuse planning permission for wind turbines on the roof at Kings House (the council’s main administrative building) -

http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/2203003.Green_turbine_plan_blocked_by_councillors/

- **VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

http://www.conservatives.com/Policy/Where_we_stand/Voluntary_Sector.aspx

“We want to see a transformation in the role of community groups, social enterprises and the voluntary sector to help build a stronger society for all of us.

“A Conservative government would create a more supportive environment for philanthropy and volunteering, reduce the bureaucracy faced by charities and voluntary groups, and enable them to earn a return on any investment they make in providing public services.”

So why did local Tories make a “nasty, politically motivated decision” to vote unanimously to refuse temporary planning permission for an advertisement which would have provided much-needed revenue for a local charity which provides affordable office space to over 20 community and voluntary sector groups in Brighton & Hove?

[\(http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/5009603.Fury_as_politicians_ban_Brighton_Community_Base_s_billboard/\)](http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/5009603.Fury_as_politicians_ban_Brighton_Community_Base_s_billboard/)

- **TRANSPORT**

http://www.conservatives.com/Policy/Where_we_stand/Transport.aspx

“CUTTING CONGESTION: Providing an improved public transport system will also be an important element of our strategy to tackle congestion.”

December 2009: the minority Tory administration attempted to pass a Core Strategy (forming the basis of the Masterplan for the city for the next decade) which removes all reference to ‘modal shift’ away from private car use to public transport, and pushes public transport to the bottom of the hierarchy.

This was only stopped because Greens, Labour and Lib Dems worked together to defeat these damaging and short-sighted proposals (<http://www.brightonhovegreens.org/localsites/bh/news/728.html>).

- **COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

http://www.conservatives.com/Policy/Where_we_stand/Community_Relations.aspx

“A Conservative Government will help foster community cohesion, but recognise that it is about much more than government and politics – it is, above all, a social responsibility.

“And that means that everyone must do all they can to make this a fairer and more just society - helping others, creating opportunity, and ensuring that no-one is excluded.”

January 2010: Tory Leader of the Council Mary Mears launches a savage and unwarranted attack on the city’s van-dwelling community (<http://www.brightonhovegreens.org/localsites/bh/news/van-dwellers-targeted-by-tories.html>).

She is forced to climb down and set up a cross-party working group to address the needs of van dwellers after an outcry from opposition parties and the general public (http://www.theargus.co.uk/yourargus/letters/4888137.The_van_lady/, <http://marymears.wordpress.com/2010/02/11/van-dwellers-setting-the-record-straight/>).

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