

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of depositions from members of the public. Each deposition may be heard for a maximum of five minutes.

Depositions received:

(i) Deputation: Brighton Area Buswatch

Brighton Area Buswatch represents local bus users. We are a branch of the national organisation, Bus Users UK. Buswatch fully supports the environmental aspects of the Valley Gardens scheme, including improvements to walking and cycling provision.

Unfortunately, we believe this scheme has no benefits for bus users. It will make bus journeys slower due to increased congestion, leading to unreliability, higher fares and less frequent services. This is unacceptable

The main areas for concern for us are:

1. There will be no formal bus lanes. Buses will have to share road space with local access traffic. Proposed 'bus gates' may be difficult to enforce, leading to more congestion.
2. Buses are predicted to take an average of 21 seconds longer at peak times to travel through Valley Gardens, while the prediction for cars is only 2 seconds longer. Extra running time for each journey means more cost for bus companies. This will result in higher fares and fewer services, which will encourage bus users to switch to cars.
3. Buses are already getting slower. Brighton & Hove routes 5/5A/5B now take 65 minutes between Hangleton and Patcham/Hollingbury compared with 56 minutes ten years ago, a decline of 16%. B&H says this requires four extra buses at a cost approaching £1 million p.a. just to keep the same daytime frequencies. When North Street was closed three years ago bus use fell because journeys were too slow. It is likely this will happen if the current Valley Gardens scheme proceeds.
4. The junction of St Peter's Place and London Road will become seriously congested with 22 buses an hour (mostly 18-metre long bendy buses) turning right towards Lewes Road, crossing between southbound buses from London Road and other general traffic. Lewes Road bound buses 25/25X, 28/29 currently use a handy slip road south of St Peter's Church which will be closed. We need effective bus priority measures here.
5. The junction of Grand Parade and Church Street will have reduced capacity. Southbound vehicles turning right towards Church Street will utilise one of the two through traffic lanes, approximately halving the main traffic flow.
6. Parts of Grand Parade will contain two lanes for general traffic reduced from four which we believe will lead to long tailbacks, especially at weekends and

event days. This will delay buses beyond the Valley Gardens area, making them less reliable.

7. The modelling of traffic flows is all based on Monday to Friday peak periods on a typical October weekday. It does not take account of heavier summer and weekend traffic flows which create unique conditions in Brighton.
8. We believe the City Council is placing too much reliance on new smart traffic signals to resolve issues, which have yet to be tested.
9. Buswatch produced alternative plans to address the main issues, which have been largely dismissed. We refute most of the criticisms made of our proposal.
10. Due to past efforts, Brighton & Hove has the highest bus use per head outside London. This must not be undermined. Buses keep this city moving.

We urge members of the ETS Committee to consider these issues before voting.

Signed by:

Andrew Boag (Lead Spokesperson)

Peter Elvidge

David Dufour

Adrian Peasgood

Jack Hazelgrove

Tony Price