

Subject: Deputations from members of the public.

Date of meeting: 2 February 2023

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which one Member of the council, nominated by the mayor, may speak in response. It shall then be moved by the mayor and voted on without discussion that the spokesperson for the deputation be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

Notification of one Deputation has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

**(1) Deputation concerning Carbon Neutral Programme
Spokesperson – Nigel Smith,**

Supported by:
Nigel Smith
Rob Shepherd
Lynne Moss
Paul Goodall
John Bryant

As we enter the 4th Year of the 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme, your monitoring report says Year 1 (2020) underperformed very badly and we know that the following year will perform even worse, as it will benefit less from 2020's big carbon reduction windfall from Covid-19 lockdowns.

You would naturally ask

- How big was the 2020 Covid-19 windfall?
- How bad was the underlying performance?
- Was the problem area Industry, Domestic, Transport or all three?
- What needs to be done to get the Programme on track?
- Why did the monitoring report not answer these questions?
- Why did it take so long to report a 2020 problem?

Though we now have official figures to show the 9.5% reduction was much less than the reduction due to Covid-19, other questions cannot be answered because the Programme lacks targets for individual areas and does not quantify the gains from planned policies.

Giving a High rating to a policy that tackles 500 tonnes of the 923,000 tonnes to eliminate, shows the lack of rigour and transparency in prioritising actions.

In order to meet the aims of the council that voted unanimously for 2030 Carbon Neutral, an emergency independent stocktake is essential, to identify the shortfalls in the Programme and prioritise the necessary remedial actions in a rigorous and transparent manner.

(2) Deputation concerning Public Toilets Spokesperson – Ann Fletcher

Supported by:

Lucy Grimme
Nicky Way
Ally Jones
Brett Vallier
Penny Parker
Deniston Jack

With regard to the proposed public toilet closures, while many individuals – and in some cases businesses – across the city would be detrimentally affected, we believe that for one particular group these proposals are actually discriminatory and if implemented will be highly prejudicial to their wellbeing. There may be no statutory duty to provide such facilities, as the council repeatedly states, but we argue there is a humanitarian duty to do so.

This deputation speaks on behalf of those people with disabilities, often hidden, that require ready access to toilet facilities. Below are some actual lived experiences of hidden disabilities, representing a tiny fraction of those likely to be impacted within our city.

Lucy has Irritable Bowel Syndrome with chronic diarrhoea. This is what her recent day trip to London from Brighton involved:

- At least 4 weeks before, stopped drinking alcohol so my bowel could calm down.
- No dinner the night before.
- Breakfast on day: ½ slice of toast and 1 inch of tea. Go to loo at friend's, walk to Brighton station, go to loo, panic about train toilets.
- Arrive in London, head to venue, queue for toilet. After the show, go to a restaurant to use their loo.
- Return on 8pm train. EATING AND DRINKING NOTHING ALL DAY except sips from a bottle of water.

Oliver, aged 5, has recently been diagnosed with Coeliac disease, and the tiniest grain of gluten makes him very ill very quickly. In the back of the car, overhearing his mum and nan discussing the proposed toilet closures, he stated indignantly: “No, they can't close them because when my tummy is upset, I really need the toilet because I have issues!”

Nicky says: I have a permanent ileostomy stoma since my colon and rectum were removed due to cancer. I am learning to live with a permanent change to the way my body works and having to use a prosthetic device (a stoma bag). Confidence is something that takes a knock when you have surgery like this. Having access to a public toilet is of utmost importance to anyone with a stoma to be able to live, work and participate in our surroundings. The proposed closures will inhibit my ability to go about a normal life, and I will be unable to enjoy a full integration into the community. I already have anxiety about leaving my home, for fears of my bag leaking in public (which is messy and smelly!).

Nicky's cancer, Crohn's disease, Ulcerative Colitis and other conditions can all lead to an ileostomy, colostomy, or urostomy. My ileostomy resulted from a perforated bowel caused by diverticular disease.

An ileostomy is a stoma that exits from the small bowel and the large bowel is not used at all (unlike a colostomy which exits from your large bowel). Your large bowel reabsorbs water and nutrients from what you eat and drink, and so the output from an ileostomy is not like a normal stool but is actually very liquid (it can be like water) and pretty constant. Your bag fills up very quickly and can need emptying as often as every hour or even half hour. You can never forget it is there and you are constantly patting it to see if it is getting full and needs emptying. You are always thinking ahead to the next toilet and where it is. You are filled with fear and dread if you think you may not reach it in time.

We acknowledge that if what we have described is not your own lived experience, you may not have understood just how utterly dependent some people are on public toilets. What we've described is a fraction of what people live with; it happens to be our own lived experiences. Please don't let lack of knowledge or understanding lead to enforcing something that is clearly discriminatory and prejudicial to the wellbeing of so many. Please don't force us and others like us to stay home because we simply do not dare to venture out into our home city.

Supporting Information

"In the UK alone, 1 in 5 people has a disability, with 80% of those having an invisible disability."

<https://www.progresslifeline.org.uk/news/living-with-hidden-disabilities/>

"Around one in five people in the UK will experience IBS at some point in their life and around two thirds of the people affected are women...IBS is a long-term condition of the digestive system which can be painful and difficult to live with if you don't have your symptoms under control. The symptoms tend to flare up in bouts lasting anywhere from a few days to a few months."

<https://www.circlehealthgroup.co.uk/health-matters/womens-health/ibs-facts-for-sufferers>

- There are 15 million woman who are of menstrual age in the UK.
 - The average age for commencement of menstruation is 12.5 years. Due to improved diet and lifestyles, this is much earlier than would have been the case around 150 years ago when the average age would have been 17 years.
 - On average a woman will menstruate until she is fifty years old, for an average total of 37.5 years. During which time she will menstruate around 500 times.
- https://www.ahpma.co.uk/menstruation_facts_and_figures/

"A reported 165 000–200 000 people are living with a stoma in the UK, with approximately 21 000 patients undergoing stoma formation surgery each year (Colostomy UK, 2021)"

<https://www.colostomyuk.org/>

"Research conducted by Crohn's & Colitis UK in 2022 suggests 1 in every 123 people in the UK have either Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. This amounts to a total of nearly half a million people in the UK living with IBD."

IBD Statistics 2022: Crohn's and Ulcerative Colitis
<https://ampersandhealth.co.uk> › Resources (IBD)

“Over the next few years we are investing £3 million to refurbish public toilets across the city. We will start Phase 1 of the programme once the summer season is over. This will allow us to keep public toilets open throughout the city's busiest time of year...The council has secured £330,000 from the government, that has been match funded with £95,500 from the council to increase the number of Changing Places Facilities in the city too. “ [July 2021]
<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-arts/update/public-toilet-refurbishment-programme>

“Cllr Nemeth said: “The city-wide closures of public toilets we are seeing is solely a consequence of the administration’s public toilet insourcing policy. This policy change was completely unnecessary, given that the city had a ten-year private contract for cleaning and maintaining the city’s public toilet blocks which had five years left to run. We must remember that all public toilets were open while this contract was running. The administration’s policy of cancelling this contract and setting up its own service has completely failed and led to the collapse of a basic service. Had this policy not been pursued, all public toilets would currently be open.””
<https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/23259945.brighton-council-blame-public-toilet-closures-tories-claim/>

(3) Deputation concerning Early Childhood Project Spokesperson – Christopher Randall

Supported by:
Charlie Stray
Susie Jones
Caroline Ackley
Cara Redlich
Clair Barnard

The Purpose of the speech is to request the city council reinstates funding, which is currently under threat of being cut from the budget.

- Introduction to the Early Childhood Project charity.
- What we do and why we do it. “We believe all children have the right to develop in a positive environment, free from prejudice and discrimination. We work to combat bias and promote equalities and inclusion in services for young children by offering support, information and resources to families and those working with them.”
- Why parents like what we do:
 - We give support and information about play and parenting
 - Children can borrow toys and books to use at home
 - Less waste, eco friendly
 - Families are financially disadvantaged, our service free
 - We sign post to other services families may need but not know about
- Commissioned work undertaken by the Early Childhood Project for BHCC.
- The proposed cut to our annual funding is £11.5k for commissioned work and £9890 for the annual toy library grant.

We respectfully request that the Council reconsiders making this cut and reinstates the £9890 toy library grant to enable the charity to continue to deliver this crucial, core service.

Thank you.

**(4) Deputation concerning Westdene School Streets
Spokesperson – Michael Letton**

Supported by:

Greg Maddocks	Alan Sparkes
Wendy Standen	John Standen
Janet Tallent	Michael Deacon
Rachel Walenta	Benedict Kraus,
Hazel Irvine	Michael Sykes
Louise Irvine	Katherine Sykes

Concerned residents of Westdene (including members of the Westdene School Streets Residents Group, the Withdean and Westdene Local Action Team, and other members of the community) have requested that an independent review is undertaken by the Local Government Association on the methodology and resultant actions imposed on local residents by the Westdene school streets initiative taken by the Brighton and Hove City Council.

This is because residents have raised concerns starting from the 'Westdene school streets taster day', and the subsequent information, lobbying, biased and limited consultation, design, impact, and actual implementation of this initiative, which went live on 22nd December 2022. Residents feel they have been ignored and at times vilified by local councillors and the council when seeking proper consultation and raising legitimate concerns.

Examples of concerns include (but are not limited to): Westdene school streets not meeting the school streets aims and objectives because it diverts traffic to queue outside the main school entrance; failure to include safe crossing points and traffic management in surrounding streets; the introduction of a permanent one way street under the guise of school streets, that increases the risk of speed and more serious accidents 24/7 alongside the communities main green space and play area, a risk independent auditors raised concerns about, but local traffic officers chose to ignore, resulting in no physical traffic calming, and increased speed.

As acknowledged by last weeks standards committee Brighton and Hove city council has a credibility and reputation issue, and it rapidly needs to rebuild confidence in its conduct, processes, and how it is prioritising the use of tax payers money.

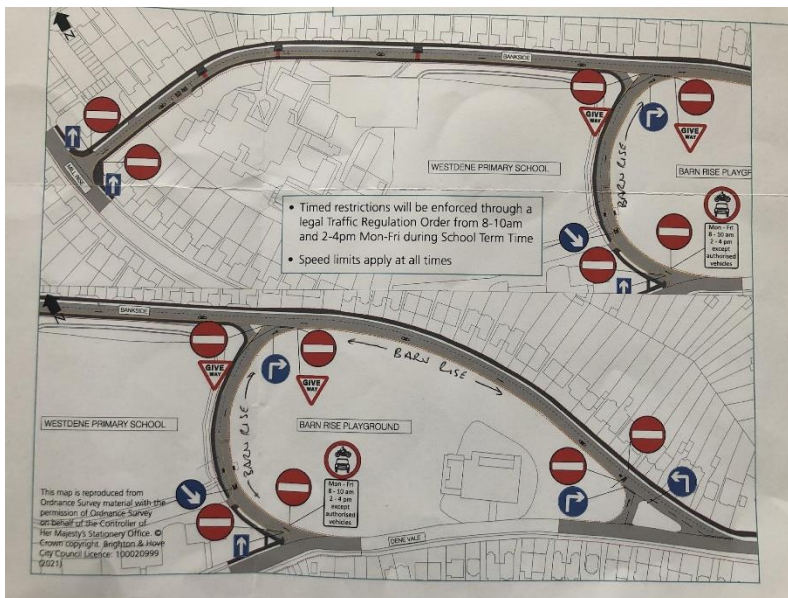
We are in no doubt with the investment available a solution that met the objectives of reducing congestion, pollution, and increasing safety and active travel was, and is possible. Instead we have a very expensive solution that fails to meet those objectives, has damaged the communities confidence in this council, and become an unnecessarily divisive community concern.

Supporting Information:

Westdene School Streets Road Safety Audit (one way system) no action taken

RSA Problem	RSA Problem 1.2-01 Problem – Vehicle speeds.
Location	Bankside/ Barn Rise proposed one-way
RSA Problem	The introduction of a one-way system will likely increase speeds on Barn Rise as drivers will not have to give way to oncoming vehicles. Outside of school arrival / departure times, where traffic is likely to be congested, collisions between vehicles and pedestrians would likely result in greater severity of injury.

Second ‘map’ produced WSS ETRO- diverting traffic to outside the main school entrance and OWS, no traffic calming alongside Westdene Green (“Barn Rise playground”) & increased risk of speed and serious injury.



Unofficial traffic counts outside the main school entrance pre and post the implementation of school streets

Traffic on Bankside (the main entrance to Westdene Primary school) 8.30-9.30 am (most cars 8.40-9.10) PRE Westdene School Streets				
3/10/22	4/10/22	5/10/22	6/10/22	7/10/22
20	47	44	34	44
Traffic on Bankside (the main entrance to Westdene Primary school) 8.30-9.30 am (most cars 8.40-9.40) POST Westdene school streets				
9/1/23	10/1/23	11/1/23	12/1/23	13/1/23
61	95	79	83	73
Average increase in traffic outside the main entrance to Westdene Primary school				
3x increase in traffic (+41 cars)	2x increase in traffic (+48 cars)	Almost 2x increase in traffic (+35 cars)	2.5x increase in traffic (+49 cars)	Almost 2x increase in traffic (+29 cars)

**(5) Deputation concerning Get Me Home Safely
Spokesperson – Megan De Meo**

Supported by:

Hugo Beynon
Camille Bowers
Sasha Hadid
Spencer De Meo
Lilly Ellis

Get Me Home Safely is a national campaign which started after one of our members, a bar worker, worked a late shift. Her employer failed to provide her with a safe route home, her bus was canceled, and she was sexually assaulted in the town center of Glasgow.

This is not uncommon, instances like this happen everywhere and they are happening in Brighton. I am often harassed in the city center after a shift, and I know this happens to my friends and my colleagues as well. Unite surveyed hospitality staff on this issue and found that 60% of workers in the industry had been sexually harassed during or after a shift. I have spent the last few weeks going into workplaces, talking to bar staff and hospitality workers. I have heard stories about women walking home in unsafe places in the middle of the night: midnight, 1am, 3am through Brighton city center.

There are two aspects that make hospitality workers vulnerable in regards to this, low pay and gender based violence.

We are the lowest paid workers in the economy. We can't afford to spend our wages on a taxi home. I have spoken to workers at a workplace where their shifts have been cut down to 4 hours. They finish at 3am and have to figure out whether they can afford to spend an hours wage on a taxi. With hours being cut to this extent, whilst bills and prices are soaring, it's a decision that is becoming harder to make.

We all know that gender based violence is an issue in our society. We all know that women experience sexual harassment and violence. Few know this better than women who work in bars, where we are routinely harassed by customers. We then have to experience this on the way home, without the relative safety that comes from our co-workers and security. If we are serious about tackling this we need to use every power we can to address the issue.

Our employers know that this problem is widespread. Rather than acting on it, businesses are choosing profit over the safety of their staff. We should and do expect employers to be responsible for staff welfare but this responsibility should not end when the shift ends- it ends when staff are at home and as safe as they can be.

I have spoken to bar staff who work in a venue that extended its opening hours so that shifts ended at 5am. They did so without consulting staff, without checking if their employees had a safe way of getting home at that time. We need to re-assess the licensing to ensure that businesses take responsibility for the safety of their staff. The council currently grants licenses for pubs to stay open late but does not take into account how this affects us as workers.

Supporting Information

https://www.unitetheunion.org/media/4561/getmehomesafely_briefing.pdf

