

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting for the hearing of depositions from members of the public. Each deposition may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which the Cabinet Member may speak in response. It shall then be moved by the Mayor and voted on without discussion that the deposition be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

(i) Deputation concerning Kemp Town Heritage.

Mr Phillips (Spokesperson)

“My name is Paul Phillips and I am Chairman of the Kemp Town Society. I appreciate the opportunity to present this deputation on behalf of the Society and residents of Kemp Town.

The Presentation Material provided is the essence of the deputation. (see appendix 1)

Rev. Thomas Kemp brought the citizens of London to Brighton. It is time to encourage tourists – the wealthy ones – to return to Brighton. And return tourism as the top economic driver for Brighton’s prosperity.

The Heritage Seafront is the Crown Jewel of the City and the primary reason for Visitors to come here. 4.5 miles long and considered the most important heritage seafront in the UK, arguably in Europe and certainly unmatched anywhere else in the world

But it is in decay – as the photos show – no less in Kemp Town

No money, no pride and perhaps unloved – why has it been left to decay? How many years will it be before these and other street lights are rebuilt? The lamps are Grade 1 listed.

The recent Core Strategy fails to place Heritage as the fundamental platform for Brighton’s economic prosperity - it is our trump card. IT SHOULD BE AND WE NEED TO PLAY THAT CARD AGAIN IN THESE ECONOMIC STRESSFUL TIMES.

The Core Strategy is essentially a housing policy document. This has its value, of course, but unless the foundation of the City’s prosperity is protected, the tourist will dwindle away. It is the Built Heritage, which needs to be placed into a PRIMARY policy as part of the City’s economic strategy moving forward, so it is protected for generations to come. I love housing – good housing. It is vital for the well-being of all. But economic activity does not come from it - once built.

I encourage those who have authority in such matters to insert the Heritage Seafront to be protected on a statutory basis and annually funded to ensure its regular and consistently planned maintenance.

It is great that the bandstand has been funded, but it should have been as a matter of course.

Roll out the red carpet for tourists. With more visitors staying for longer the city's businesses will thrive – even in the off-season

The proposed Marina development is a dark cloud for those who treasure heritage. We are not against redevelopment. I single it out, as we have had waves of highly significant planning procedures, which seem to come out with little warning – the immediately affected residential community seemingly the last to be consulted and the most affected by it. The result of this is that despite soothing words in the planning application documentation, there is a seething discontent at having this immense project thrust upon us.

The imposition of such a massive development on such an exposed, constrained and sensitive location impacting on our sea horizons and skyline is unconscionable.

The loss of key strategic views for all of Brighton and its damage to the image of Regency Brighton for the sake of squeezing in much needed houses, as I am led to understand, is highly detrimental to the overriding character of Brighton's SEAFRONT image and character. All the SPDs, SPFs will become all but worthless if their guidance – the spirit of the guidance - is ignored. English Heritage is not happy – neither is the Society.

There is a better solution. Not least to resist all current applications there until the new SPD is developed for the area. A new one with this development underway will render it virtually pointless.

The Marina Act is there to protect the City from such sacrilege. I hope this does not become the fulcrum of decision for a heavy weight contractor to push its way to achieve its ambition to build a new (free) supermarket and the highly compromised housing estate off the backs of the presumed wealthy – who are most unlikely to be the primary purchasers there.

Shoe-horning a modern poorly laid out development, with no iconic architecture to justify its special treatment, is not welcome.

I hope all will see the wood for the trees in the potentially disastrous outcome should it be passed by the planning sub-committee in its current form. Or rather natural and built heritage values to be obliterated by a new sea of towering blocks of concrete.

Lets instead rebuild our prize attraction of iconic heritage, and build only sensitively styled, quality buildings which integrate with the vase historic canvas already in place and roll out the red carpet once again for visitors and strategise ways to keep them coming throughout the year, for years to come.”

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR GEOFFREY THEOBALD
Provided at the meeting of the Full Council on 4 December 2008.

I invite members of the committee of the Kemp Town Society to meet with officers for a full briefing on the content of the Core Strategy.

Many of the 'new' emphases that the Kemp Town Society has proposed as 'revisions' are already in the Revised Preferred options Core Strategy at my instigation including:

- specific reference to investing in public spaces, and
- prioritising maintenance of the seafront

We have been the Administration for a year and a half, and in that period you will have seen the bandstand given the go ahead and works are going on, and also the Madeira lifts. However, I take what you say very seriously.

The importance of Heritage is emphasised in the Core Strategy but a strategic document is not the place to set out detailed protection policies. The appropriate place in the Local Development Framework for detailed policies will be the following 'Development Policies and Sites Allocation Development Plan Document'.

I would also add that we've added two additional conservation areas during this time.

Nonetheless as part of the consultation carried out earlier in the summer the views of the Kemp Town Society are being considered alongside other amenity group comments. I have asked officers to consider whether a programme for dealing with high quality heritage areas can be brought forward in more detail alongside the LDF. This must be attached to the emerging LDF, but I have asked that officers report back to me on whether this programme can be brought forward independent of the LDF work programme.

I am not going to comment directly on the Marina Development application which is properly being considered by the Planning Committee. You referred to the Marina Act and this is very important because if the Planning Committee did vote to go for a scheme that went over the cliff height, it would have to come back to this council and this council would have to vote under the Marina Act."

