

Overview and Scrutiny Commission,  
Brighton & Hove City Council,  
Kings House,  
Grand Avenue  
Hove BN3 2LS.

3rd March 2011

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Public Consultation - Request for a Scrutiny Panel**

We are writing to you to express our concern regarding public consultation in Brighton and Hove. There are clear guidelines established in the government's *Code of Practice for Public Consultations*, also in BHCC's own *Community Engagement Framework*, however, local practice often falls short of the guidelines and aspirations set out in these documents. It sometimes appears that BHCC is merely paying lip service to community engagement.

Consultation exercises are sometimes poorly carried out - eg. late notice, poorly presented exhibitions, biased and silly questionnaires. Too often questionnaires purporting to be 'consultation' are merely 'information'.

We appreciate that in some cases there might be a huge range of comments received, and that the views of individual residents cannot predominate and a compromise must be reached. However, even in cases where a majority of residents are in strong agreement, their views are sometimes ignored.

In the case of large construction projects, the developers are required to carry out consultation, but there is no monitoring of the consultation, nor whether the results are acted upon. The danger with developer consultation is that people feel that if they have objected at this stage there is no need to register their objection with the Council, who are then not aware of it.

In order for consultation exercises to be meaningful and effective, it is vital that they are well-designed and fair, and that the results are sent to the Council, and published afterwards.

We, the undersigned, are of the opinion that a Scrutiny Panel is the way forward. We are therefore requesting that a Scrutiny Panel be set up by the Council, to look into public consultation in Brighton and Hove, in order to assess, monitor and improve the situation, taking into account quality, budgets & cost-benefit issues, gathering evidence to find examples of best and worst practice, and to produce a report, to be given to all Councillors. We request that this be added to the agenda at the next meeting

We hope you will be in agreement with our proposal, and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Corinne Attwood  
Brighton Society



Graham Towers  
Montpelier & Clifton Hill  
Association



Sandy Crowhurst  
North Laine Community  
Association



Roger Hinton  
Regency Square  
Area Society

Distribution: Chairman, Councillor Gill Mitchell; Deputy Chairman, Councillor Brian Pidgeon;  
Councillors Bennett, Cobb, Elgood, Kennedy, Meadows, Morgan, Older, Peltzer-Dunn, Wakefield-Jarrett

