

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.

Deputations received:

- (i) **Deputation:** Valley Gardens Phase 3- To express the concerns of the Valley Gardens Forum

The Valley Gardens Forum is a group of central Brighton residents, public sector organisations and businesses, small & large, sharing concerns about the Council's plan to remodel the centre of the city.

Supporters include: local residents, North Laine Traders, Brighton Lanes Traders, Seafront Traders Association, Kemptown Traders Group, Brighton Fringe, Brighton Events Group, Brighton and Hove Taxi Forum, Tourism Alliance, Pavilion Surgery, Brighton Language College, Brighton & Hove Restaurant Association, Brighton Grassroots Music Venues, Sainsbury's Local, Marlborough Pub & Theatre, Palace Pier, Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton Old Town Local Action Team, The Kingscliffe Society and other residents' groups, 'KIBS' sector employers including solicitors, surveyors, digital start-ups and more..

Our diverse and lively group is exactly the kind of sounding board the relevant local councillors should want to encourage and engage with at the earliest stages of reimagining our critical infrastructure in the city. There is no hidden agenda - or singular viewpoint. An accessible conglomerate of people who live, work and love in Brighton.

Yet somehow, something has gone seriously wrong with Valley Gardens 3. Everyone I've listed around the community feels marginalised and ignored. Even if the current plans were outstandingly good; the seismic shift in direction which the project has taken in the last 3 months, the perceived arrogance displayed by the administration, officer and consultants alike and a feeling we are being 'steamrollered' is baffling.

Having 36 hours to prepare formal questions to the latest plan with new and significant changes does not feel like appropriate process. We received the updated plans on Wednesday late afternoon and have read a report a report that beyond the officially sanctioned consultation, makes no reference to numerous community representations and submissions since the last ETS committee meeting.

We're desperately worried about the implications for air quality on the East side of Old Steine. Kemptown residents and businesses feel marginalised in this current scheme by the physical roadway barrier from Edward Street to Madeira Place, and there are wide concerns for our much-loved city events landscape. And at a time when local services are starved of resources, too many people are sleeping on the city's streets and Brighton's existing public infrastructure is not being adequately maintained, Brighton & Hove City Council are not winning the argument that an additional £8m of public money should be devoted to this.

No one would disagree with the strategic imperative of “making it difficult to drive into the city” so that people would do it less. And we’d all agree there should be less cars in the overcrowded centre. But the way to achieve this is a holistic solution that leads from the outside in with an attractive Park and Ride scheme supported with affordable, modern and reliable public transport; to ensure that old and young, able-bodied or not, remain welcome in our wonderful city. It feels like Valley Gardens is trying to solve this huge and complex issue by working in reverse from the very centre. Opinions of lobbyists who talk of winners and losers, omelettes and broken eggs in relation to their own narrow agendas should not be the only voice in the room.

Valley Gardens will have an impact that lasts a generation. The Valley Gardens Forum is an opportunity to help rather than obstruct your mission. The open discussion initiated within the Forum so far, strongly suggests that a consensus is perfectly achievable - with diverse, highly-engaged and non-partisan stakeholders who hope to engage with councillors and all specialist Council officers. Prominent councillors from all three political groups have engaged with our views to jointly urge a constructive short pause - without preconditions - in order to reset, rebuild trust and develop a scheme that we can all be proud of. We urge the administration and the ETS Committee to accept this collegiate way forward.

Signed by:

Daniel Nathan (Lead Spokesperson)

Michelle Spicer

Karl Jones

Roger Rolfe

Anne Ackord

Simon Thetford

John Healy

Diana Palmer