

**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 deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which the Chairman or relevant Cabinet Member may speak in response. The deputation will be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

**(i) Deputation concerning retail development in Portland Road, Hove.****Mr Gavin Beatty (Spokesperson)**

Since I was last able to address this chamber a lull has ensued in regard to the possible location of a major food retailer on Portland Road, Hove. The then current traders from the proposed site had widely advertised themselves as being immovable using larger banner type posters to proclaim “we will not be moved”! Our community had a sense of relief and solidarity and the Portland Road Traders Association was born.

Then September brought further rumours that a major food retailer had in fact attached itself to the ‘Carpetting Strategy’ highlighted in the previous letter to this chamber.

This letter outlined the strong sense of unity felt by our community and its opposition to any possible location of a major food retailer on Portland Road as endorsed by an unprecedented 2000 plus signed petition. Local residents and traders were definitely not convinced that such a project would bring any benefits to our communities. Further more, these residents and traders expressed their deep concerns regarding the following issues:

- Traffic congestion and parking
- Large delivery vehicles inappropriately parked
- The same large delivery vehicles off-loading during antisocial hours in a residential district and / or during school runs.

As September brought the rumours, so October brought the physical activity on the proposed site. Firstly, the bathroom Shop, Reflections, could indeed be moved! It was finally confirmed that a major food retailer had definitely decided to take up the opportunity afforded to it. Incidentally, no correspondence has ever been received from the Bathroom Shop (Reflections) by any of the local traders with whom they had traded side by side for very many years.

The upshot of this action, as I spoke to a number of local traders concerning this matter, was of a real fear for the future of their hard work for businesses especially during a time of further economic and political uncertainty.

As I spoke to one local trader concerning the probable location of the major food retailer, the fear manifested itself as the local trader began to visibly shake – the possibility had become a stark and frightening reality.

Portland Road is a busy traffic thorough fare linking central Hove and to add to the existing traffic volume could potentially bring traffic to a standstill, creating 'rat runs' through both North and South Poets Corner.

The potential for reduced air quality along the route the younger members of our community regularly travelling to their local nurseries and schools is of real concern and could potentially contribute to possible asthma related deceases let alone having to negotiate inappropriately placed vehicles.

In her reply, 30 April 2009, Councillor Mary Mears indicated that...

"Nationally, there has also been a shift in district centres from traditional food stores and shops towards a wider range of uses such as coffee shops, restaurants and estate agents occupying the smaller retail premises. This expansion and diversification of usage can be seen in the Portland Road area and I think that the local community benefits from the variety.

The Councillor continued ...

I would also like to add as well, particularly in areas like Portland Road and many other districts in the city, what makes Brighton and Hove so unique is our diversity. I think its key to Brighton and Hove, its one of the things that makes us so special and it really is important for any local council to ensure that we protect it."

The residents and traders on and around Portland Road call upon the council to help combat the location of major food retailers in our communities. The ability of these large scale traders to monopolise the local commerce in using the previously described 'Carpetting Strategy' may have a catastrophic effect on the diversification so successfully nurtured over the last decade, specially on Portland Road. We would ask of the council to use whatever powers it has at its disposal to curtail the growth of major food retailers in our city and support the residents and traders who may have supported the Council to its current position thus far.

Gratitude extended ...

Gavin Beatty