

Geoff Raw
Chief Executive
Brighton & Hove City Council

Dear Geoff,

VALLEY GARDENS PHASE 3

I am submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee (TECC) meeting of 18th June 2020.

On the 31st May I wrote directly to Cllr. Appich in her capacity as the Chair of TECC Committee. Regretfully, I received no response or even an acknowledgement and I know that many in the city are keen to learn of her position and views on this matter especially as Cllr. Appich is the new tourism boss for Brighton & Hove. The following is the text of the 31st May letter.

In my capacity as, Conservative Spokesperson for Transport I write to you in respect to the current designs for Valley Gardens Phase 3 and its potential impact on tourism and businesses generally in the city.

Previously, whilst this project has been debated, your predecessor Cllr. Robins informed Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee (Cllr. Robins was a member of that committee) that in his opinion, Phase 3 of Valley Gardens would not have a negative impact on tourism.

Further, Cllr. Pissaridou, the current Chair of Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee dismissed the concerns of Anne Ackord who is both the Chief Executive Officer of the Pier and Chair of Brighton and Hove Tourism Alliance. Anne Ackord has expressed grave concerns about the current design of Phase 3 and the negative impact it would have on tourism.

Equally, the Valley Gardens Forum representing trading associations, businesses, the taxi trade and bus users, educational establishments, NHS practices, hoteliers, event organisers, the licenced trade, the hospitality industry and residents have been effectively side-lined in their attempts to constructively work with the council to find a solution that provides better active and public transport solutions in the area whilst maintaining the economic opportunities for the city.

With the unprecedented times we find ourselves in and the need for us to provide every opportunity for our economy to recover (and not do anything that could even remotely harm that recovery) I enquire as to your views and position on this matter.

Would you agree that it is unwise to progress the Phase 3 scheme as presently designed if there is a risk to economic recovery? Would you agree that all those involved in the economic DNA of our status as a tourist city would have a better understanding of how decisions will impact them than the council? Would you agree that at the very least they should be heavily involved in informing the council as to how to shape the city for the

prosperity of all and the revenue they generate, the taxes and rates they pay and the jobs they create.

Would you be prepared to meet with these entities in open forum to give you the opportunity to hear first hand their concerns and ideas (as opposed to just reading officer reports). Would you be prepared, if convinced by their views, to recommend that Phase 3 as presently designed be abandoned and redesigned with all stakeholders fully and properly engaged.

The council is setting up a climate assembly to help shape the city to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Do you think businesses should have an equal role to play in shaping how our economy can thrive?

You will hear argument about the expediency to deliver Phase 3. The Local Enterprise Partnership has recently agreed to place the funding in its next five-year plan; thus, funding is secure. With the council inevitably going to have to rethink its budget commitments because of Covid-19, do you think it unwise to presently commit to the expenditure required from the city's taxpayers for this phase?

The impact of Covid-19 is enormous and will require significant rethinking about many aspects of our collective future, how we do things and what is the priority for now. Is it not time to put Valley Gardens Phase 3 into that mix rather than pushing forward with all the risks that it brings?

I very much look forward to hearing from you.

With my best wishes,

Cllr. Lee Wares