

Geoff Raw
Chief Executive
Brighton & Hove City Council

Date: 9th September 2020
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Dear Geoff,

LOCAL CYCLING & WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

I am submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee (ETS) meeting of 29th September 2020.

We have now had several meetings between councillors and officers and stakeholders regarding the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). These meetings have been to solicit views and opinions to help shape the draft proposals that will eventually go to public consultation.

At the very first meeting with just councillors and officers I raised concern that unless the plan heavily focused on the suburbs, as opposed to the city centres where most investment for walking and cycling seems to go, the council would miss a huge opportunity to meet its 2030 carbon neutral pledge.

My observation was that unless the council provided quality and affordable well-thought out infrastructure for public transport, cycling and walking, there would be little incentive for residents to either give up the cars or use them less. I made it clear that just forcing people to change would not be effective. I know some in the room refuse to believe that unless good alternatives exist, people will still use their car but will go elsewhere. Well, it is happening. People are refusing to go into the city and spend their money on our own economy. Instead they are driving to neighbouring towns spending their hard-earned cash there but in travelling more miles are increasing pollution. The city is presently encouraging precisely the opposite to what it wants to achieve.

The preliminary LCWIP schemes we are seeing are not addressing the issues. Cycling infrastructure is being proposed where there is already some infrastructure and existing demand exists. That is fine, but little is being provided in the suburbs where car ownership is highest. For walking, infrastructure is primarily being focused on areas of existing high footfall.

What none of this is doing, is creating the infrastructure to enable people to move away from car use in high car ownership areas or to create infrastructure to encourage more cycling or walking outside the city centres.

I have continued to raise this at meetings and I am told my points are being heard and I am being listened to. I regret however that I am not seeing that converted into proposals to deliver on the same.

So, at formal committee level, I wish to again high-light my concerns and look forward to seeing a radical change in direction of where the current LCWIP plans seem to be taking us. If the council continues down the current path it should not then subsequently seek to lambast, prejudice or penalise citizens who still use their car because the council has done little to help them change.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Cllr. Lee Wares