

Subject:	Items referred from 19 December Full Council meeting		
Date of Meeting:	29 September 2020		
Report of:	Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Mark Wall	Tel: 01273 291006
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Wards Affected:	Various		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 To receive the following deputation referred from the full Council meeting held on the 19 December 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee responds to the deputation either by noting it or where it is considered more appropriate, calls for an officer report on the matter which may give consideration to a range of options and writes to the deputation spokesperson setting out the committee's decision(s).

3. CONTEXT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 To receive the following deputation along with the extract from the minutes of the full council meeting and supporting information which is detailed in appendix 1:

(4) Deputation concerning Tackling air pollution and congestion on the A259 from Brighton Old Steine to Eastbourne

Spokesperson Nigel Smith

Supported by: Rob Shepherd, Lynne Moss, Damon Crane, Sean Flanagan
Ward affected: Rottingdean Coastal

I have lived in Rottingdean for many years and am very familiar with bus and car travel along the A259 to the City. I am part of the A259 action group which is endorsed by Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council. Together we are looking at ways to ease air and traffic pollution on the A259 between Brighton and Eastbourne - and address the growing delays to our vital bus services.

This stretch of road was recently named as a Major Road Network (MRN) by the Government. As such, the A259 is now eligible for funding from central Government to improve how it transports people and provides access to the Strategic Road Network and Rail Network.

Lewes District Council is funding a £50,000 survey of this stretch of road. This detailed piece of work will form the evidence basis of future funding bids.

I am here today because we have two main problems:

1. The surveyors need detailed and well-modelled information about the Valley Gardens scheme.
2. If the Valley Gardens phase 3 scheme ends up adding to local congestion, then this may undermine any bids for funds to improve our transport corridor.

I appreciate that Valley Gardens phase 3 is an issue that some of you are weary of - and that you want to just get on with it. However, put simply, the A259 Action Group is worried that our bids for funding will be jeopardised if the relevant bodies have the slightest concern about the calculations on which the VG3 plans are based.

Our consultants have already identified a number of errors in the business model for Valley Gardens phase 3. The queries they have are complicated and difficult for the non-expert to grasp. Four examples:

- The congestion "disbenefit" has been miscalculated. It should actually be £22m, possibly £26m, rather than £17million.
- The delay time given during the evening is too low, most likely as road widths were not factored into the traffic models and bus traffic has not been adequately assessed.
- VG3 does not tackle estimated "do nothing" congestion costs of c.£200m plus its associated carbon and Air Pollution.
- The benefits of VG Option 1 are difficult to reconcile with the data, raising suspicion that another accounting error of up to £4m is involved.

I hope you agree that we need to tackle congestion, delays, pollution and the high carbon footprint along the A259 corridor as well as in central Brighton.

To ensure that future funding of the A259 is not jeopardised, I am here to request that an independent audit of the source data and analysis that the Valley Gardens project is based on is undertaken, followed by open publication of their conclusions.

Ideally the Department for Transport should be asked to perform this audit.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**COUNCIL****4.30pm 19 DECEMBER 2019****COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL****MINUTES**

Present: Councillors Phillips (Chair), Robins (Deputy Chair), Allcock, Atkinson, Barnett, Bell, Brown, Childs, Clare, Davis, Deane, Druitt, Ebel, Evans, Fishleigh, Fowler, Gibson, Grimshaw, Hamilton, Heley, Hill, Hills, Hugh-Jones, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Littman, Lloyd, Mac Cafferty, Mears, McNair, Miller, Moonan, Nemeth, Nield, O'Quinn, Osborne, Pissaridou, Platts, Powell, Rainey, Shanks, Simson, C Theobald, Wares, West, Wilkinson, Williams and Yates

52 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**(1) TACKLING AIR POLLUTION AND CONGESTION ON THE A259 FROM BRIGHTON OLD STEINE TO EASTBOURNE**

- 52.1 The Mayor reported that one deputation had been received from members of the public and invited Mr. Nigel Smith as the spokesperson for the deputation to come forward and address the council.
- 52.2 Mr. Smith thanked the Mayor and stated that: I have lived in Rottingdean for many years and am very familiar with bus and car travel along the A259 to the City. I am part of the A259 action group which is endorsed by Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council. Together we are looking at ways to ease air and traffic pollution on the A259 between Brighton and Eastbourne - and address the growing delays to our vital bus services.

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is worried that our bids for funding will be jeopardised if the relevant bodies have the slightest concern about the calculations on which the VG3 plans are based.

Our consultants have already identified a number of errors in the business model for Valley Gardens phase 3. The queries they have are complicated and difficult for the non-expert to grasp. Four examples:

- The congestion “disbenefit” has been miscalculated. It should actually be £22m, possibly £26m, rather than £17million.
- The delay time given during the evening is too low, most likely as road widths were not factored into the traffic models and bus traffic has not been adequately assessed.
- VG3 does not tackle estimated “do nothing” congestion costs of c.£200m plus its associated carbon and Air Pollution.
- The benefits of VG Option 1 are difficult to reconcile with the data, raising suspicion that another accounting error of up to £4m is involved.

I hope you agree that we need to tackle congestion, delays, pollution and the high carbon footprint along the A259 corridor as well as in central Brighton.

To ensure that future funding of the A259 is not jeopardised, I am here to request that an independent audit of the source data and analysis that the Valley Gardens project is based on is undertaken, followed by open publication of their conclusions.

Ideally the Department for Transport should be asked to perform this audit.

- 52.3 Councillor Pissaridou replied, Thank you for your presenting your deputation on behalf of the A259 Action Group about the A259 and the Valley Gardens Phase 3 project, Nigel. As a stakeholder group, I am sure that the County and District Councils will have due regard to your comments and views about their projects and studies, such as the A259, alongside those of others. I have also noted your comments about the A259, as we also strongly lobbied with both East and West Sussex County Councils to ensure that the A259 was recognised and included in the Government’s Major Road Network.

We are aware of the A259 study that the county has chosen to put forward for funding as part of the Major Road Network programme. The city council’s priority for money from that same fund is focussed on the essential reconstruction of the A259 Seafront Highway Structures (or Arches) that hold up the A259 in the central area of the city. It really is important that we take every opportunity to secure as much external funding as we possibly can to invest in our transport infrastructure.

Councillor Fishleigh recently asked a question about the A259 study at a council meeting in October, which I replied to. As I said then, once this council has a clearer understanding of the detail and extent of that study, we will be able to fully consider what information may be available that could help to inform it. We have not been approached for any information yet, and therefore your reference to the need for certain information about Valley Gardens appears somewhat premature.

I therefore can’t accept your suggestion that the Valley Gardens scheme will undermine a funding bid to the Government for a large section of the A259 in East Sussex, because the study criteria and methodology have not yet been fully defined yet; there has been no consultation; and a scheme design has not been developed.

However, should the Government ever require any further scrutiny or audit of the information that it requires to be submitted as part of its future funding processes, such as a complex computer-based transport model, then we would respond positively to such a request.

I am aware that the technical points that you have mentioned about the Valley Gardens project are the same as those within the ongoing correspondence that you are having with council officers, as I have also been in receipt of those e:mails. However, as you know (but I will repeat for the benefit of the councillors and members of the public here) the Business Case has been considered on several occasions by the Local Enterprise Partnership. This process has included an independent review, carried out at the request of the Local Enterprise Partnership, which has confirmed that it is robust, and this has therefore enabled the £6 million pounds worth of Local Growth Fund money to be allocated to the council.

We have carefully considered the design of the busy and dangerous Palace Pier junction on the A259 to ensure that it is more people-friendly, and not dominated by vehicles. This will help contribute to the council's ambitious target of achieving carbon-neutrality by 2030, by making it safer, more attractive and easier for people to walk and cycle. The new traffic signals will use the latest technology and enable us to manage movements and minimise congestion at peak times in the mornings and evenings, and at busy weekends or event days. Where air quality levels are poor, we will also ensure that legal levels **are not exceeded**.

I remain confident that we have done everything that is required of us to progress the final phase of the Valley Gardens project. Having secured the funding for it, I am looking forward to the next stage of the design process so that we can complete it project and start to see the regeneration and transport benefits that it will bring to the city centre and adjacent areas for years to come.

52.4 The Mayor thanked Mr. Smith for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. She explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.

52.5 The Mayor noted that concluded the item.

Supporting information for Item

A259 Traffic from the Pier to the strategic transport hubs Brighton Station and the A23/A27

The VG3 Business Case summary (see *below*) sets out the current traffic congestion in the VG area (based on analysis from 2015 measurements on a number of key routes).

The key thing is *people* now experience 4-minute morning delays plus 7-minute evening delays (*Line 37 below*) and VG3 will increase these delays by almost 10% (*Line 43 below*). From the perspective of A259 people journeys, including ones to and from the strategic transport hubs, VG3 brings further unquantified delays at Dukes Mound and at the Pier. Whether the current bid for funding up to £50m to improve the A259's bus and other journey times will be successful, is questionable given that people experience such long delays, delays that VG3 will further undermine. Any uncertainty about the quality of the traffic models will add to this concern

The VG3 traffic modelling is certainly not robust, particularly the treatment of bus journey times is dubious, as buses waiting for other buses to vacate bus stops appears not to have been considered, (which is significant problem at peak times) or the lane widths in key places, which affects capacities.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	
30	Assessment Year															
31	2051															
32								AM		PM Interpeak			Nights Saturday		Sunday	
32	DM Demand in Period							23,591		22,659						
33	DM Total flow in Period							22,240		20,416						
34	DM Latent Demand							0		470						
35	DM Delay per vehicle (processed Vehicle) - secon							247.6		348.3						
36	DM Queue Delay per vehicle (unprocessed vehi							273.4		392.9						
37	DM Total Delay per vehicle - seconds							247.6		349.3						
38	OPT1 Demand in Period							23,558		22,663						
39	OPT1 Total Flow in Period							22,162		20,125						
40	OPT1 Latent Demand							0		530						
41	OPT1 Delay per vehicle (processed Vehicle) - sec							247.3		404.0						
42	OPT1 Queue Delay per vehicle (unprocessed veh							273.9		454.4						
43	OPT1 Total Delay per vehicle - seconds							247.3		405.1						
44	Time saved / vehicle seconds							0.4		-55.9			0			
45	Hour per day in which savings occur							1		1						
46	Assessed days per Annum							260		260			260		364 52 52	
47																
48	Average flow							23,575		22,661			0 0		0 0	
49																
50	Average flow per day which receive benefits							33,025		vehicles						
51	Average journey time benefits per day - minutes							-0.45		minutes						
52	Total time saved in year 2051							-90,769		hours						
53	Unit time in opening year 2021 (in 2010 prices)							1,372		pence						
54	Total journey time saving in opening year							-1,245,542		£ per year						
55																
56																
57	Assessment year							20		years						
58																
59	Journey time benefits over assessment period							-£25,611,154		£ in 2010 market prices						
60	Journey time benefits over assessment period							-£17,041,524		£ in 2010 market prices						
61	discounted to 2010															
62																
63	DM Construction Cost							£0								
64	OPT1 Construction Cost							£7,840,000		2018 Q2						
65	Net Construction Cost							£7,840,000								
66	PRI Factor to 2010							0.786614011								
67	Net Construction Cost							£6,167,053.85		2010 Prices			NOTE deducts £130k for events income			
68																
69	Market Price Factor							1.209								
70																
71	Net Market Cost							£7,455,968		2010 value at Market Prices						
72																
73																
74	Discounted Benefit							-£17,041,524		£ in 2010 market prices discounted to 2010						
75	Discounted Cost							£6,724,856		£ in 2010 market prices discounted to 2010						

The VG3 Business Case puts the cost of the extra congestion it causes at £17m (*Line 61 above*) on which basis the existing 11-minute delays are costing us over £170m (the delays are 10 times longer).

The A259 funding bid will be concerned at these economic costs being so high (its case will be built around reducing the economic costs of people's delays and improving public transport ...) and its evidence base will have to show existing bottlenecks like VG have been tackled as much as possible, so increasing the delays will need justification and the estimates will have to be robust.

In everyday terms – the DfT will see no point in improving people's journey times along the A259 if they simply run into a bottleneck around Valley Gardens, a bottleneck which is already serious but will get substantially worse, and worse by an estimated amount they cannot trust.

The DfT is also likely to be concerned that the Carbon Footprint is being increased at a time when B&H is failing to meet its Transport Carbon Emissions Target and the NO2 emissions on the South of East side of the AQMA are being increased when B&H is not confident of meeting these targets.

It is therefore very important that

- The traffic modelling is opened to **independent** inspection before it is made available to the A259 study group.
- The traffic model is revisited to look for opportunities to **reduce congestion** and its impact on Public Transport and Carbon emissions and on journeys from the A259 to strategic hubs.
- A more robust model and traffic data is available for when the A259 study group needs it, including the new junctions on the A259 (Dukes Mound and the Pier)

Independent Inspection is vital. Like VG3 Business Case, the traffic modelling is very questionable, so having the same consultants revisit it and make the same assumption, will not improve its quality to degree needed, nor will it identify any big opportunities for improvement that were overlooked.

Note:

B&HCC and ESCC will find it hard enough explain to the DfT why at a time when A259 traffic volumes are decreasing, the A259 delays *including bus journey delays* are increasing. It will be very hard to win a bid for improvement if we add to the impression our house is not in order.

