

The Youth Climate Assembly – background

From the end of September until the beginning of December 2020, we held 5 x 1.5 hour sessions over Zoom with a total of 24 different young people, aged between 12 – 25. They all came from various schools, colleges and Universities in Brighton & Hove. There was a pretty equal mix of male and female participants, along with some who were BAME, SEND and LGBTQ. One of the members from the group, who also sits on the Youth Council, presented a young person's perspective to the main Climate Assembly in the first meeting.

We were also joined by some adult guests at the meetings, who were experts or had a particular interest in environmental issues, especially Transport and the Council's pledge to become carbon neutral by 2030 – which was the main overarching theme of the group, in keeping with what the main Climate Assembly were discussing also. These adults included Councillors, members of the BHCC Transport Team, Teachers, the Head of B&H Bus Company, Green Community groups and Sussex Wildlife Trust. They observed and helped to inform or edify the discussions with young people when needed, by answering questions or sharing knowledge and experience in their respective fields. We also shared videos from other experts - some local, some from other areas in the country – that were also shown to the main Climate Assembly, to help stimulate discussions on the themes presented.

Brief overview of outcomes from the Youth Climate Assembly

Ambassador project:

- Having one representative per school from the Youth Assembly talking about the Youth assembly to their classmates and organizing similar Youth citizen assemblies in schools

Buses:

- Improving affordability. Although the council can't subsidise the bus company at the moment, there is a need to put pressure on the bus company to reduce fares.
- Think of incentives to do so such as reducing congestion to improve the number of people taking the bus and therefore increasing profit which can be reinvested into making fares more affordable.
- Making them greener: quotas per year so that eventually by 2030 all buses are working on renewable energy. These numbers should be publicly available so that the Brighton and Hove residents are aware of the targets to be met in order to make sure that the council is abiding by the targets they have set

- Affordability should be prioritized over greener buses to stop people using cars
- Improving bus routes to parts of Brighton that aren't well connected. This is essential for people with limited mobility who are often forced to take taxis to get into town for shopping for example
- Make buses safe during COVID. Number of car users has gone up compared to last lockdown. Improve awareness about the fact that there is hand-gel and windows remain open
- Give more information about how much a car costs to have in terms of petrol, tax, insurance, parking. Campaigns in schools to learn about the cost of driving. It could be included into science classes in an interactive way for potential drivers to learn the environmental and monetary costs of driving.
- On top of cost of the car, there is the issue of the practicality of buses.
- Implementing mobility hubs to improve the routes to work
- Need to reduce congestion to improve efficiency of buses. Rethinking the timetables of buses so that at certain hours there aren't too many buses going to the same stops such as in Lewes road garage and Churchill square.
- Implementing more bus lanes to reduce congestion

Workplace Parking Levy:

- Charging for car usage might discourage people using the car but how do you make the difference between those who should be charged for it because they can afford to pay a tax and those who would severely be impacted by an extra tax on car use.
- this should mainly apply to bigger businesses who employ over a certain amount of employees and make a certain profit
- Workplace could provide electric bikes for their employees instead of having to pay parking slots
- Workplaces in Brighton could ask their employees to fill in surveys about what mode of transport they use
- There must be alternatives to car usage before taking pay off the employees because some of them will have no other option but to take the car because they live far away

Social Justice:

- we need to compensate taxi and Uber drivers for loss of income if cars get taxed.
- need to help with the transition to green jobs to make sure that those who work in sectors that use cars don't lose out. Work with Mp's.
- introducing E-Cargo bikes, encouraging and subsidizing them, for deliveries/ taxi service. Can be used for small jobs to reduce traffic on roads (Zedify)

- Important to work with migrant and BAME community groups to find out needs regarding transport in Brighton

Cycling:

Things to improve and what is stopping people from taking bikes:

- Storage at home and at the destination was an issue, because of theft. In addition, difficulty in finding the correct routes and lack of cycle lanes was also a problem.
- Safety is listed as something that stops people using bikes
- Expense of a bicycle (especially for international students that won't be able to bring the bike home after their studies. A lot to invest in a bike for short amount of time
- Dutch company, called Swapfiets, which provides maintenance/service support for bikes they sold
- Storage problems on campus
- Bike lanes need to be able to accommodate cargo bikes and tricycles

