

Brighton & Hove City Council

Public Engagement Meeting

Agenda Item 11

Subject: Deputations from members of the public.

Date of meeting: 3 February 2022

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which one Member of the council, nominated by the mayor, may speak in response. It shall then be moved by the mayor and voted on without discussion that the spokesperson for the deputation be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

Notification of one Deputation has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

**(1) Deputation concerning free bus travel for young people
Spokesperson – David Bailey**

Supported by:

Charlie Goldsmith
Curtis James
Catherine Mercer

Lisa Petitt
Will McInnees
Darren Snow

Ward affected: All

**Councillor Clare, Chair of the Children, Young People & Skills
Committee will reply.**

Deputation

Class Divide is a grassroots campaign fighting to urgently bring attention and change to the deeply unjust educational attainment gap between young people from the communities of Whitehawk, Manor Farm and Bristol Estate and their counterparts in the rest of Brighton and Hove. The campaign is made up of parents, residents, experts and supporters who have experienced these problems or have expertise in education. For more information about the campaign see www.classdivide.co.uk.

My name is Dave Bailey, and I am a member of Class Divide. From January 2022 all children and young people under the age of 19 in Scotland have the right to free bus travel. In the recent past, both the Labour Party and the Green Party have committed to a policy of free bus travel for children and young people in England.

Class Divide wants Brighton and Hove City Council to:

1. Commit to providing free bus travel policy for all residents of Brighton & Hove under the age of 17 by April 2023.
2. Instruct officers to produce a report that examines in detail the case for a free bus travel policy that accounts for the potential positive impact on young people's lives as well as the economic and environmental benefits to the city.
3. Investigate how such a policy can be implemented given how current bus services are funded in the city and identify any changes that would need to take place to implement a free bus travel policy for under 17s.
4. Bring together all providers of bus services in Brighton and Hove to discuss this policy and get concrete commitment from them to support changes necessary to enact it.

We know that the devastating cuts to local authority budgets mean that councillors have some very difficult funding decisions, however, we think that free bus travel for children would play a significant role in recovery from Covid, in both the boost it will give the local economy and the positive difference it will make to children, whose lives have been so badly impacted by the pandemic. It will also make a huge difference to families, who are facing the worst cost of living crisis since the 1980s.

Supporting information:

The case for this policy is overwhelmingly positive.

- Free bus travel has significant economic, social and environmental benefits.
- Our own research on this issue shows that free bus travel benefits all children as it promotes independence, improves personal safety, increases self-confidence and makes them more likely to spend time with friends.
- Free travel for children has particular benefits to children living in families where money and resources are tight by increasing opportunity and reducing inequality. For example, 'transport poverty' stops being a significant constraint on the lives of less affluent children. It reduces inequalities in access to education and allows families to make school choices based on preference and needs rather than transport affordability. It also makes access to leisure facilities, cultural and other opportunities that promote positive social and emotional development fairer and less tied to family income.
- In addition, free travel for those under 17 years of age would benefit everyone living in Brighton and Hove. As children use the bus more, parents and carers can use their cars less and this could have a positive impact on congestion and air quality in the city. Given that in 2020 it was reported that the area around Brighton's Clock Tower is the third-worst location in England for Nitrogen Dioxide this is absolutely vital. Less short journeys in cars would be good for those who have no choice but to drive, like essential workers, tradespeople, delivery drivers and those with disabilities.

