

Brighton & Hove City Council

Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

Agenda Item 40(c)

Subject: Deputations

Date of meeting: 15 November 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.

Notification of a further two Deputations has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

1) Deputation: TRO-22a-2022 and TRO-22bO-2022

Closing Gardner Street to all traffic Mon-Fri (along with the existing closures on a weekend) from 11am – 7pm. There are currently blue badge parking bays in use which will no longer be available.

The council's engagement and consultation with disabled residents has not been inclusive it has been inadequate and inaccessible. The council under its Public Sector Equality Duty has a responsibility to pay "due regard" and to treat disabled people more favourably and the council also needs to be able to evidence this. Council officers informed us that comments on a TRO can only be received in writing, and no reasonable adjustments were offered. However, Possability People and Badge who have more accessible means of engagement have received a large volume of concerns and objections to the proposed closure.

Gardner Street is a residential area, and this closure would be imposing a curfew on disabled people Imprisoning them in their own homes between the hours of 11am and 7pm. Preventing them from being able to attend essential health appointments or leave the area for any reason which will compromise their health and wellbeing. We contend that is a human rights issue and a safeguarding risk which hasn't been addressed or even mentioned in the EIA. However, the inadequate BHCC EIA being presented to committee states that the only group with protected characteristics that are being disproportionately disadvantaged are disabled people.

The only mitigation offered is that additional blue badge bays are placed in nearby Regent Street. However, it needs to be acknowledged Blue Badge holders are already permitted to park for a limited period, so this "mitigation" does nothing to compensate for taking away the current bays. A further issue that has not been addressed is the distance from Regent St to Gardner St. People qualifying for a blue badge may not be able to walk, or if they can for only very short distances. The "mitigation" means to access the street blue badge holders would have to walk at least 150/200m or more and that is just one way. No individual who is in receipt of a mobility component can walk more than 200m. We contend this is not a mitigation but discriminates against 13,500 residents who are blue badge holders. Apart from Blue Badge holders Gardner St needs to remain accessible for taxis, NHS ambulances or volunteer drivers in order for drop offs and pick ups to be made for essential appointments.

The proposal is making this area of the city no go areas for disabled residents and visitors, the Purple Pound is thought to be worth £249 billion (and is expected to increase year on year). Disabled People are customers too.

Unfortunately, the narrative from officers to stakeholders has polarised the debate and has put residents who have objected to the proposal in the position of feeling unsafe. When meeting with the highways department we asked that they look at this issue creatively and look at other solutions or compromises. They have not engaged in the process and continue to take a binary approach, to close or not to close.

The City is in the process of developing an Accessible City Strategy and have committed to working with disabled residents and organisations to make the city welcoming and accessible to all. This proposal is far removed from this commitment.

Supported by:

Geraldine Des Moulins
Graeme Trelford-Davies
Kate Annetts
Pippa Hodge
Rob Arbery

2) Deputation: Hove Waste and Recycling Site

Residents local to the Hove Waste and Recycling Site request that as site operations apparently can't be reduced to a level that makes the impact tolerable, it be moved to a different, non-residential location.

I have lived in my home, which backs onto the front opening of the main hall at the Hove Waste site, for over 20 years. When we bought the house plans were in place to locate a waste site on the land behind, and we were assured that operations would not impact local residents, as indeed it did not until recent years. Residents report that their quality of life, wellbeing and ability to use their homes for recreation and work have been adversely impacted. This deputation comes after three years of complaints to Veolia, which once seemed fruitless were directed to our local councillors, then to our MP. We then attempted to have our voices heard by contacting the Head of City Clean, then the Director of the Environment, then the Head of City Environment, Strategy and Service Improvement, who eventually copied in EHL Environmental Protection Team. Despite some measures taken by Veolia to mitigate the issues, they all persist.

Since operations have increased under the management of Veolia, as in over the last few years, we who live near the site have increasingly experienced intolerable disruption to our rest, relaxation and experience of living and working at home in the following ways - appalling odour, intrusive noise, presence of excessive numbers of flies, and vermin infestations.

Noise

My first complaint about intrusive noise to Rob Allen, Contract Administrator, then Martin Benson Household Waste Recycling Cites Manager at Veolia was in December 2020 having my household woken on a holiday day at 7am. I was told there were specific 'cleaning' days when the noise was allowed to start earlier than usual, around once a month. A few months later the noise was starting at 7am every week day and 8am on weekends, with no consultation with, information or explanation to local residents. The noise comprises could be described best as loud bangs which sounds like explosions, grinding noises, engine noise and reversing alarms. We have been repeatedly told that Veolia gained permission in March 2021 (3 months after the 7am noise started) to extend operation hours until March 2023. That this permission was granted is the first issue, that our repeated complaints and calls to cease these extended hours not just reduce the number of days they happen, have come to nothing is another. Veolia built an 'acoustic fence' without consultation with residents, and which had no effect at all.

Odour

Complaints regarding the intolerably bad odour from the site have been made repeatedly, especially since the summer of 2020, when the very occasional day of increased odour became almost daily and more noticeable. On some days, local residents notice the odour from early in the morning and still late into the evening, even outside of the hot weather season. The odour is noticeable as far up as the Sackville crossroad, to down into Poet's Corner despite Veolia apparently using 'deodorisers'.

Flies and Vermin

Residents report that for over 2 years now they have had elevated numbers of flies in their homes. Veolia eventually responded to repeated complaints by 'fogging' occasionally and setting 'fly traps' at the site. These measures seemed to reduce the number of flies this summer overall, but still not to an acceptable level. Officers from these organisations explain that our issues with these vermin infestations are

due to our proximity to the Waste Site, and that these issues are increasing locally due to the increase in operation capacity at the site over recent years.

Supported by:

Alison Lovegrove (Lead Spokesperson)

Emine Canpolat

Stella Letanka-Jeffs

Mel Reynolds

Keziah Barton-White

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Sophie Taylor

Melissa Waters

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