

Brighton & Hove City Council

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 13

Subject: Public Questions & Deputations

Date of Meeting: 4 September 2024

Report of: Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law

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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 To receive any deputations submitted to Democratic Services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.2 That the Committee responds to the deputations.

Deputation On Planning Application BH2022/02232 — Royal Mail Depot on Vale Avenue

This Deputation is presented by lead spokesperson P. Mannix and is supported by J. Carr, A. Peacock, T. Mastoris, N. Herrmann, M. Stokes, E. Elton, G. Goliand and J. Carr.

We wish to highlight two new areas of concern on planning application BH2022/02232, the Royal Mail's depot on council owned Patcham Court Farm, Vale Avenue BN1 8YF.

Firstly, we wish to highlight our significant concern to Brighton and Hove City Council of a new threat of contamination to the safety of the Patcham Aquifer which feeds the tap water for residents, businesses, schools, public buildings and NHS services which is very likely to be caused if Brighton and Hove City Council approve planning application BH2022/02232 for the Royal Mail depot in a wholly residential area in Vale Avenue.

Brighton and Hove City Council are aware an email from Rachael Powys-Keck, Future Growth Planner of Southern Water dated 14th August 2024 to Ben Davies, Team Leader Development Management - West & Enforcement Team of Brighton and Hove City Council clearly states Southern Water has concerns that upon reviewing "the technical note dated 1st August 2024, which documents the developer's proposed winter working suggestions Southern Water notes that this would allow the development to commence during the winter period, when our source is most at risk from contaminating activities. Construction activities during the winter presents a heightened risk, even with the inclusion of the proposed mitigation measures." Southern Water's email of 14th August 2024 goes on to state, "Therefore, our previous request that no winter working be conducted remains unchanged." Southern Water's email explains that the technical note of 1st August 2024 has errors in it and Southern Water

very clearly state, "The on-site Amazon filters are designed to treat seasonal turbidity fluctuations only. The Amazon filters are not designed to absorb additional turbidity loading, which could occur during or shortly after the construction of external structures as a consequence of this specific development. The current presented mitigation plan for turbidity will therefore possibly not reduce the risk of the source going offline due to turbidity." Southern Water states they "would like to highlight that Brighton A is a Strategic Water Source. Should this source be forced offline, we would not be able to source water from elsewhere to ensure a continuous water supply to our customers. Brighton A supplies approximately 139,000 properties in the area. Given the sensitivity of our groundwater abstraction, Southern Water is unable to remove our previous conditions for this planning application." Southern Water's email then clarifies that it is still a condition that "below-ground construction works are limited to the summer months, i.e. April to September of any given year."

It is clear from Southern's Water's latest concerns that Royal Mail is not adequately taking into account the previous conditions set by Southern Water to ensure the safety of the water of Brighton A which is a Strategic Water Source. There are many vulnerable residents in the area very close to Patcham Court Farm; children, elderly and younger adults who are immunocompromised who could suffer significant health concerns and even a risk of death if their tap water supply is contaminated. Brighton and Hove City Council must protect the water supply of its residents with a higher priority than any economic benefit it may gain from its lease offered to Royal Mail for the use of Patcham Court Farm after approving Royal Mail's depot Brighton and Hove City Council must therefore refuse planning permission for application BH2022/02232.

Secondly, Brighton and Hove Bus & Coach Company Limited have stated in a letter dated 13th August 2024 to Alasdair Walmsley, Principle Transport Development Officer of Brighton and Hove City Council that they will only guarantee to divert the first bus of the day to accommodate Royal Mail's workers at Patcham Court Farm for one year and, "This service will require a minimum of twenty passengers per day to justify the continued operation of the diversion. Should this threshold not be met consistently, we reserve the right to review and potentially discontinue the diversion after the initial year of operation." Therefore, Brighton and Hove City Council would be badly advised to rely on a bus service that is only guaranteed for one year to Patcham Court Farm in order to approve application BH2022/02232. It is public knowledge that Royal Mail in Brighton and Hove are still losing more staff and having to heavily rely on agency staff. A high turnover of staff does not guarantee this bus service will get the minimum passenger numbers to continue the service after the first year of service which in turn will lead to more staff parking in residential streets around the site than anticipated by Royal Mail if the bus service is cancelled. Therefore, this planning application should be refused.

Signed – (redacted)