

Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



A branch of Bus Users UK

Buswatch News – October 2018

Valley Gardens Phase 3 Public consultation is now open

On 9 October the Brighton & Hove City Council Environment, Transport and Sustainability (ETS) Committee approved Valley Gardens Phase 3 plans to progress to detailed design and public consultation. This covers the area south of Edward Street, around Old Steine to the Palace Pier roundabout.

Four main options were considered. All involve four traffic lanes on the east side of the Old Steine two in each direction. In preferred Option 1 the Palace Pier 'Aquarium' roundabout would be replaced with traffic lights. The area in front of the Royal Pavilion where northbound buses use listed art deco shelters would be pedestrianised. Instead northbound buses from North Street would have to turn left after the War Memorial opposite Sainsbury's Local. Southbound buses heading for North Street would follow the same alignment (as today) but the long bus stop opposite Sainsbury's Local (stop H) would go. **The replacement bus stop locations are totally inadequate.** Brighton & Hove Buses had asked for more space for bus stops but these plans provide less. The only bus lanes would be on the south side of the Old Steine. Elsewhere buses would have to share road space with general traffic. So buses would no longer benefit from priority measures, which inevitably means slower and fewer bus journeys.

There were almost 50 million bus journeys in Brighton & Hove last year, that's more per head than anywhere in the country except London. This has been achieved through a strong partnership between the Council and bus companies over twenty-five years, resulting in new bus lanes and other priority measures; some of these are now under threat.

The scheme has been designed to ease traffic flows by reducing the number of road junctions. It was made clear at the meeting that all modelling had been based on improving the road traffic flows, no attempt had been made to model pedestrian or cycle movements. The cycle lanes end abruptly at both ends and cyclists would have to mix with pedestrians on pavements before crossing roads to reach other cycle lanes, which makes no sense.

Council debate ignored bus users

Members of the ETS Committee debated the Valley Gardens Phase 3 proposals for almost an hour on 9 October. During that time buses were only mentioned briefly, once. Facilities for bus users were completely ignored. Councillors were only interested in the roundabout, access from Madeira Drive and Dukes Mound (one mile away) and blaming each other for delays to the scheme. Most bus journeys pass through Old Steine and the proposed changes will have a huge impact. You have to wonder whether members of the transport committee ever travel by bus.



On the left are the three existing art deco style listed bus shelters serving all northbound bus routes which would no longer be used. The right hand photo shows where the replacement stops are planned at the Castle Square/Old Steine junction. The lack of space is obvious but was not mentioned during the long debate.

A public consultation opened on 15 October with a small display in Hove Town Hall. This is not easy to find it as it faces away from the entrance door in the Customer Service Centre. The on line consultation is available at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk and it is open until 25 November. The display moves from Hove Town Hall to Jubilee Library in Brighton between 1 & 21 November. Staff will be available between 10am and 4pm on 23, 25 & 27 (1pm on 27th) October and 3 November. Also 8 & 13 November 10am to 7pm. If you use buses through Old Steine please make sure you have your say. Full details of the proposed scheme with plans are available at: [https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000823/M00008102/\\$\\$ADocPackPublic.pdf](https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000823/M00008102/$$ADocPackPublic.pdf) (scroll to pages 73-89)

Buswatch would like to support the Phase 3 proposals but the current plans are unacceptable because they fail to take account of the needs of bus passengers. If implemented as shown there is a real risk of more congestion for buses leading to slower journeys which will discourage bus travel. In London badly planned road schemes have led to a significant decline in bus use recently and big cuts to bus services are now planned. We must not let that happen here. Buswatch has been discussing the implications with bus companies and we know they share many of our concerns. We have now been invited to a meeting with the Project Team. Hopefully they will accept some changes to the design.

Brighton & Hove Buses launches anti-hate crime campaign.

Anti-hate crime posters are now displayed in many Brighton & Hove buses. Hate crime can include insults, shoving, attacking or intimidation. It can be verbal as well as physical. Fortunately, it is rare but Brighton & Hove Managing Director says “we want people to have the confidence to report all forms of hate crimes and help us to confront prejudice and discrimination. Drivers union Unite is also supporting the campaign.

Goodbye Mike and Welcome Nick

At our meeting on 17 October we said goodbye to Mike Best, Commercial Director at Brighton & Hove Buses who retires next month. Mike has been attending our meetings for many years as the main representative from Brighton & Hove. He has always been very approachable and willing to consider suggestions. I have a particular reason to thank Mike as he encouraged me to become more involved and suggested we should raise the profile of our group. That resulted in the creation of Brighton Area Buswatch in 2012.

We welcomed Nick Hill who has been appointed as Mike’s successor. Nick began his career with Go Ahead sister company Metrobus and he has been based at the combined head office in Conway Street for the past few years. Nick is very enthusiastic with lots of ideas and we look forward to working with him.

Brighton Area Buswatch meeting

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be at 5pm on **Wednesday 23 January 2019** in Brighton Town Hall. Meetings are open to all, but space is limited so please contact Buswatch at the address below if you wish to join us.

Buswatch News is produced and edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. We welcome your contributions and suggestions. The next issue is due mid-November 2018.

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