

HOVE STATION QUARTER

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NEIGHBOURHOOD BRIEFING

ISSUE No.3 DECEMBER 2023

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE HOVE STATION QUARTER

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR REFERENDUM

On December 14th the full City Council will agree that the Hove Station Neighbourhood Plan goes forward to its Referendum, to be held no later than March 6th 2024. The council's Head of Electoral Services has told us that the actual voting date will be announced before Christmas.

All residents in the Neighbourhood Plan Area who are eligible to vote in local elections will be able to vote - some 10,000 people. They will all be sent poll cards and have the option of a postal vote. Polling stations will be those used for council elections. All this is organised by the council but paid for by a government grant.

Voters will answer 'Yes' or 'No' to the question, 'Do you want Brighton and Hove City Council to use the Hove Station Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?' The bigger the majority of yes votes, the more influence the local community will have on the future of our area.

For the full picture and updates, visit the Forum's website, Facebook page and coming soon, our Next Door page too.

Hove Station
Neighbourhood
FORUM

www.HoveStationForum.co.uk

TRAFFIC CHIEFS UP FRONT AT FORUM MEETING

On a cold November night we had a warm welcome at the Salvation Army hall in Conway Street, with tea/coffee and biscuits generously provided. The Forum organised the meeting to give its members a chance to listen to and then question Trevor Muten - Goldsmid Ward councillor and chair of the council's Transport and Sustainability Committee - alongside Mark Prior, Assistant Director of City Transport. Forum Chair Mike Gibson opened the meeting by reading out a letter of support from our MP Peter Kyle, which emphasised the importance of developers paying for improving streets in our area, exemplified by the Hove Gardens improvement of Conway Street, Ethel Street and Ellen Street.

Mike then outlined key transport issues which the Neighbourhood Plan had highlighted, including the importance of minimising the number of additional cars brought into the area by large scale new developments (Hove Gardens will be virtually car free), the need for Newtown Road west of Fonthill Road to be incorporated in an extended Controlled Parking Zone and the challenges of rat-running and increasingly dangerous road junctions.

He also stressed that delivering the Plan's vision of a new, joined up Hove Station Quarter straddling the railway will require improving the existing footbridge and the pedestrian/cyclist-hostile tunnel, together with a new footbridge from the MODA development into the station car park. Cllr Muten gave a 'new broom sweeping clean' type outline of the new administration's emerging approach which demonstrated his awareness of the transport issues for action identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. Mark Prior explained that over half his £6m annual budget was spent on road maintenance and the rest on a variety of transport schemes including active travel (cycling and

walking) and safer streets.

The 35 residents took full advantage of their chance to voice their concerns and demands for action.

A longstanding Fonthill Road resident pointed to the increasing volume and speed of traffic past her house and the regular accident 'near misses' at the junction with the now heavily trafficked Newtown Road

A resident of Clarendon Road echoed concerns about fast moving, high volumes of traffic which had turned his road into a 'rat-run' like Fonthill Road.

A newcomer living in the Chrome Works apartments on Newtown Road said she felt unsafe using the footbridge at night because of the dim and occasionally absent lighting.

A Sackville Road resident highlighted the issue of deteriorating air quality which was adversely affecting residents' health, particularly those with asthma.

Local ward Councillors Birgit Miller and Joy Robinson - both on the Transport Committee and both co-opted members of the Hove Station Forum Committee - emphasised these concerns in a robust hour long discussion.

We explained that the Forum will follow up the meeting by establishing a Transport Action Group to support community engagement in the development of traffic management projects and to campaign for council action to implement the Neighbourhood Plan proposals for a traffic management plan for the whole Hove Station Quarter.

Mark Prior agreed the need for more collaborative ways of working with the Forum, especially after the Referendum. Councillor Muten gave us the assurance that substantial reports detailing the new administration's approach to traffic and movement issues in the Hove Station Quarter were being prepared for the next Transport Committee meeting.

TWO HOVE STATION QUARTER LOCATIONS IN THE TOP TEN 2024 ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

The December 6th Transport Committee agreed a Top Twelve Priority List of locations for its Safe Streets Better Streets (SBS) projects for 2024-25. The good news is that Goldstone Villas, Clarendon Villas and Eaton Villas is top of the list and

Fonthill Road -Newtown Road is number five.

The number one improvement project has history. The Committee report noted that it was 'previously part of the Hove Station Corridor Scheme but paused due to (PTO)

requirements for a whole area improvement and associated funding constraints'. In fact it was paused in autumn 2022 because the council's scheme was announced without any prior consultation, which provoked a residents' petition organised by the Labour Party. Forum representatives met the council's transport officer in charge and demonstrated that the proposals to resolve the problems of the 'roundabout' at the bottom of Goldstone Villas would cause major traffic difficulties in the streets north of Clarendon Villas. The Fonthill Road – Newtown Road junction improvement scheme is very welcome first step in dealing with the rat-run which takes the increasing volumes of traffic under the tunnel and along the soon

to be improved Ellen Street past the new Hove Gardens apartments. Residents are clear that 20 mph speed restrictions must be enforced along both roads; The early delivery of these schemes should be a good start to the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan traffic proposals. But the lessons of the failed 2022 Hove Station Corridor Project must be learned. The technical design of these projects is already underway but it must be brought out from behind the drawing board early in the New Year to enable genuine community engagement to influence the process. This should include joint workshops with Council transport planners and public meetings which the Forum's Transport Group will help to organise.

HOVE STATION QUARTER FOOTBRIDGES - OLD AND NEW

OLD - The December Transport Committee also set out the new administration's on the deteriorating footbridge and the need for a second footbridge west of the station. But the news is mixed.

The report makes it clear to the new Transport Committee that, like it or not, it has an ongoing legal liability to pay for the maintenance, cleaning, lighting and repair of the very old footbridge, but Network Rail is responsible for regular safety inspections and determines what repairs are to be carried out and when.

The report states that 'Network Rail have indicated that the structure needs a full assessment that could help extend the life of the structure by identifying repairs ... and will inform the council of the initial estimate for the next round of repairs once the assessment is complete'. However, in 2022 the Forum was informed by Network Rail that this assessment was nearly finished and that the repairs are included in its 2024-29 work programme

The good news is that the report finally confirms that an indicative sum of £500,000 has been set aside for work to be started when this NR assessment is completed. The bad news is that the report does not convey the urgency of the need for early non-structural repairs to provide new lighting and anti-graffiti side panels to replace those which apparently are being eaten by rats. The Forum will attempt to resume its 2022 dialogue with Network Rail and work with the council to persuade NR to authorise urgent short term non-structural repairs as soon as possible.

NEW - Unfortunately the proposal for a second footbridge has been kicked into the long grass. This key proposal of the Neighbourhood Plan was the subject of a formal deputation to the council, led by the Artists Corner Residents Group, supported by the Forum, Hove Civic Society and local councillors. It requested the council to allocate £70,000 of MODA's Section 106 contributions to fund an initial design/feasibility study which Network Rail has agreed to undertake.

The Committee report acknowledged that a second footbridge from the MODA development into the car park is a policy commitment in both the City Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan and most recently in the Council's detailed Hove Station Area Supplementary Planning Document. But the community's request was refused on the grounds that '...it is a concept that can be explored as part of the wider development of the area (including redevelopment on and around the car park site)'. This ignores the point that the feasibility study would be the first stage in 'exploring the concept'. The Council submitted a failed bid for government Levelling-up funding. A feasibility study would both strengthen any future bid for government funds and inform the long term development of the Hove Station Quarter.

Thus, the neighbourhood coalition which submitted the deputation will continue the campaign for council action to deliver this key project to connect Hove Station Quarter north and south of the railway.

HSQ - NEWS IN BRIEF

New neighbours 2024

By this time next year we will have some 2,500 new neighbours - the tenants in the Hove Gardens Conway Street development and the MODA Hove Central Sackville Road development. But there will also be significant new employment and recreational opportunities. The challenge will be to start finding ways of enabling both longstanding residents and newcomers alike to create and share the evolving identity of Hove Station Quarter.

Goldstone Apartments

The redevelopment of the former Peugeot dealer's site on Newtown Road is now well underway, with the prospect of a show house opening towards the end of next year. The scheme will provide 148 homes for sale with a pocket park and café in the centre of 3 blocks – the highest one of 11 storeys.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO CONWAY STREET WEST OF GOLDSTONE STREET?

The short answer is that the Go-Ahead Brighton Bus Company is redeveloping its site for a new bus garage in a four storey office and engineering building to be completed by the end of 2025. The longer answer is that it is but the first phase of the bus company's property re-development plans. At the end of next year, it intends to submit a planning application for the redevelopment of its existing garage east of Goldstone Street for new high density residential and commercial uses, including its Head Office accommodation, to be ready for occupation at the end of 2027.

These second stage proposals will be finalised in the context of a collaborative working arrangement which the council has recently established to ensure that the key landowners – itself, the Go Ahead Group, Matsim Properties and Network Rail - eventually deliver a joined up redevelopment of the whole Conway Street area - as envisaged in the Neighbourhood Plan.

This process will inevitably be shrouded in 'commercial confidentiality' but the Forum will use its many years' experience of working with developers in the community's interest to make it as transparent as possible.

A Christmas donation to support our New Year Referendum campaign?

We are all unpaid local volunteers but for the past few years we've had limited government funds to help prepare the Neighbourhood Plan. But having done that we are now entirely reliant on local donations to meet ongoing costs of 4000 copies of this Newsletter, venue hire, a Zoom account, public liability insurance etc. Please consider contributing to support our upcoming Referendum campaign, by emailing us at hovestationforum@gmail.com with 'Donation' in the subject field and we'll get back to you with details.



We wish everyone a very Happy Holiday and all the best for 2024